THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF MUSIC AND ENGLISH POETRY
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES (1150-1500)
by
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Abstract

This thesis must be regarded as an outline, rather than an exhaustive study, of the inter-relationship of music and poetry during the Middle Ages (that is, from the middle of the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century).

It is always difficult to set limits for creative movements and, when they have been set, to justify them and to work consistently within them, for one cannot make definite divisions between movements, nor confine trends of thought and creative impulse within the boundaries of a definite space of time. The year 1150 was chosen as the first limit of this essay because little in English has come down to us from the first half of the century, and the small amount that has, belongs to the Old English rather than the Middle English tradition. Since medieval and renaissance trends overlapped each other throughout the entire fifteenth century the terminal limit (1500) had to be chosen arbitrarily. The adoption of 1500 has more than the convenience of a round number to recommend it, however, for most of the literature of the fifteenth century belongs to the Middle English tradition; even those developments at the end of the century which look forward to the renaissance are not of such a revolutionary character that they cannot be considered as still part of medieval literature.
While music shows some analogies with all its sister arts, it is the art of poetry that it resembles most. The present work, therefore, deals primarily with the characteristics of the form and style of medieval music (special emphasis being given to the music of the church) and its influence on poetic forms like the lyric and liturgical drama. The main contention of the thesis is that, during the monodic period of music, the two arts were completely dependent on one another. With the development of polyphony, however, music became so intricate that it could no longer be used as a vehicle for words. The old union of poetry and music was gone, never to return in quite the same way again. Although it is true that music and poetry came together for a brief period in the Elizabethan Age it was not the same kind of unity. In the renaissance, music and poetry were two mature arts that enhanced one another; either one could be enjoyed without the other, but, in the Middle Ages, (that is, the period in which monodic music flourished) neither the music nor the poetry was complete in itself -- they were created for one another.
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Chapter I

Although philosophers and musicologists of all ages in historic times have advanced many theories in an endeavour to explain the origin of music, they have been unable to present any one theory which has not been the subject of dispute. For example, the philosophers of ancient cultures taught that music was given to man by the gods, while those of more sophisticated times suggested that music may have been associated with work rhythms or with man's need to express strong emotions like rage, pain, fear, or love. Whatever the theory, however, the true origin of music remains as much a mystery to us as its date in the beginnings of time.

Since musicologists have no extant records from which to determine the manner of the birth of music they assume that the development of primitive cultures mirrors that of European races. From a study of the savage races of today\(^1\) musicologists have been able to evolve certain theories, one of which is that (with living primitives, at least) "music begins with singing\(^2\)." This conclusion

\(^1\) The continents of Africa and Australia, where aboriginal races survive in number, offer the richest fields for investigation.

\(^2\) Some early twentieth-century musicologists felt that music had its origin in the dance. M. Dalcrozi (an authority on eurythmics) went so far as to suggest that "... all the rhythmic elements in music were originally formed after rhythms of the human body ...." Quoted by
is based on the fact that no songless people has ever been discovered. The Stone Age, for instance, still endures in parts of the Austral continent and tribes without musical instruments are said to exist, but even they have well-developed songs. Since song is such a universal means of self-expression it must be as instinctive in human beings as it is in many species of birds.

Primitive music is characteristically performed in conjunction with tribal custom and ritual, rarely for its own sake. As the ritual connection of the music frequently links it with words, the emphasis is placed on the voice. Even when instruments are used to accompany the songs the voice is of primary importance, indicating that in the early stages of its development music is mainly a vehicle for words.

What is known of ancient Greek music (which is

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T. Taig in Rhythm and metre, Cardiff, University of Wales, 1929, p. 118. Modern students, however, feel that sound came before rhythm. For further information on this viewpoint v. Sachs, C., The rise of music in the ancient world, East and West, New York, Norton and Co., 1943, p. 21.


4 From the inherent conservatism of primitive races there is little reason to suppose that their music has greatly changed over long periods. As a result, the main features of surviving primitive music must give a broad idea of primitive music in antiquity.
one of the oldest distinct musical styles studied by musicologists) clearly indicates that the Greeks, too, always included the words in the term music. In fact, Plato declared that music was not music at all unless it had a text. The Greeks actually had two different meanings for this art; "the one broad, the other narrow:

...In the broad sense it meant the whole of intellectual or literary culture, as opposed to the culture of the bodily faculties, grouped under the term gymnastics.
...In the narrow sense...the Greeks included under music...the dance movements which accompanied singing, and the poetic text itself.

This definition indicated a dichotomy between song (in the broadest sense of that word) and every other branch of artistic culture.

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6 Translation quoted by G. Reese in Music in the Middle Ages, New York, Norton and Co., 1940, p. 11.

7 Besides including music in the arts of the nine muses, the Greeks regarded it as a great civilizing factor, linking music with education and government. They expounded, too, the doctrine of ethos, or magical effects of the different modes on men. These theories formed part of the traditions handed on to the Middle Ages by Boethius. For further information on the doctrine of ethos v. Plato's The republic, transl. H. Davies, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1902-1908, vol. 2, III, 398, E, also Aristotle's The politics, transl. Ernest Barker, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1946, vi(iv) 3, a 20, and v(viii) 5, 1340, a 38.
Greek traditions of music were transmitted through the late Roman writers, Boethius (480-524 A.D.) and Cassiodorus (477-570 A.D.), whose works, representing the last bastion of pagan thought, undoubtedly had a profound influence on European music during the Middle Ages.

These two writers, taking the Greek theories as a foundation, evolved their own interpretation of the classifications of music. Boethius, in his *De institutione musica*, divided his music into three main categories:

"(1) *musica mundana* (harmony in the macrocosmos),
(2) *Musica humana* (harmony in the microcosmos, i.e. man), and
(3) *musica instrumentis constituta* (practical music, an imitation of 1 and 2). Several modern authors have thought that (3) consisted of instrumental music only, but it seems, in fact, to have included vocal music as well, the word *instrumentis* here representing all natural and artificial means whereby man may wilfully produce music. Cassiodorus divided music into (1) *scientia harmonica* (dealing with the structure of melody), (2) *scientia rhythmica* (dealing with the correspondence between melody and text), and (3) *scientia metrica* (dealing with metrical analysis)^8."

Since the musical theories of Boethius and Cassiodorus

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were almost the only ones taught in the early Middle Ages, the musicians of that period depended, to a large extent, on the works of these two men for the fundamentals of their art. In the eleventh century the eminent Swiss (or German?) theorist, Hermannus Contractus, gave his version of Boethian theory thus:

Oportet autem nos scire, quod omnis musicae rationis ad hoc spectat intentio, ut cantilenae rationabiliter componendae, regulariter judicandae, decenter modulandae scientia comparetur.

It is not surprising to find, therefore, that there was a very close association of text and music in the Middle Ages. Indeed, poetry was regarded as a branch of music, for, not only were poems performed orally (often with harp accompaniment), but they were written by musician-poets who were expected to supply both text and music.

The oral presentation of poetry goes back to the days of antiquity and seems to have been a custom common to most European peoples. Now oral presentation does not necessarily mean that the poems were sung (as we understand the term today), but rather, that they were either chanted on a single note with a drop of the voice at the end of

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"Moreover we should know this, namely that all the theories of music have this purpose in view, that there may be established a system of putting a song together methodically, of judging it according to rule, and of rendering it in a fitting manner." For this translation I am indebted to Dr. G. B. Riddehough of U.B.C.
the phrase, or sung to a simple tune which was repeated over and over until the completion of the poem. The performance might or might not be accompanied by the harp, depending on the talent of the performer.

From early times music (that is, singing to harp accompaniment) occupied a position of great importance in Britain. Unfortunately, the earliest songs and poems (those of the Celtic bards) were not preserved in writing. As a result, our first recorded literature comes from the Anglo-Saxons whose traditions were somewhat similar to those of the Celts. There are many references in Old English poetry to the scop singing, either for entertainment or for a special event like a funeral or wedding. Perhaps the best illustration of the scop's art is the poem Widsith which is the story of a professional singer or poet who wandered from court to court singing songs and giving an account of his experiences.

\[\text{"Bonne wit Scilling sc\text{"Ir\text{"ran reorde} }\text{"for uncrum sigedryhtne song ahofan} \text{"h\text{"l\text{"de b\text{"i hearpan hle\text{"opor swinsade;} }\text{"bonne monige men m\text{"odum wlonce} \text{"wordum sprecan, p\text{"a be w\text{"el c\text{"uban, }\text{"baet h\text{"i na\text{"efre song s\text{"ellan ne hydron}10.}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}}10 "Widsith," An Anglo-Saxon verse-book, ed., W.J. Sedgefield, Manchester University Press, 1922, p. 4, 11.103-108.

'The phrase, or sung to a simple tune which was repeated over and over until the completion of the poem. The performance might or might not be accompanied by the harp, depending on the talent of the performer.

From early times music (that is, singing to harp accompaniment) occupied a position of great importance in Britain. Unfortunately, the earliest songs and poems (those of the Celtic bards) were not preserved in writing. As a result, our first recorded literature comes from the Anglo-Saxons whose traditions were somewhat similar to those of the Celts. There are many references in Old English poetry to the scop singing, either for entertainment or for a special event like a funeral or wedding. Perhaps the best illustration of the scop's art is the poem Widsith which is the story of a professional singer or poet who wandered from court to court singing songs and giving an account of his experiences.

'Đonne wit Scilling scīran reorde
'for uncrum sigedryhtne song ahōfan
'hīlīde bī hearpan hleopor swinsade;
'bonne monige men mōdum wlonce
'wordum sprecan, pā be wēl cūban,
'baet hī næfre song sēllan ne hýdron10.


"When I and Skilling for our conquering lord
With clear voice raised the song, loud to the harp,
The sound was music; many a stately man,
Who well knew what was right, then said in words
That never had they heard a happier song.
Singing to the harp was not confined to professional singers, however, for in an often quoted passage from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* there is a description of the custom of passing around the harp at social gatherings\(^\text{11}\).

When the Normans conquered England in 1066 they brought their cultural traditions with them, with the result that, earliest narrative verse after the Conquest shows obvious signs of both English and Norman influence. Poems like the *Brut*, for example, though primarily Old English in character, show unmistakable traces of the French syllabic line. As there is no extant music for these poems it is difficult to prove that they were performed orally. It is known, however, that the long French narrative poems (the *chansons de geste*) were always sung\(^\text{12}\) and that the old Saxon lays were chanted or recited to the accompaniment of the

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\(^{12}\) "Taillefer, William's minstrel is said to have encouraged the troops at the battle of Hastings by singing a song of Roland. The *chansons de geste*, of which the *Song of Roland* is one, were always sung". Pattison, op. cit., p. 24. Further proof is supplied by Johannes de Grocheo, who, writing in 1300 about the method of performance of *Le Gieus de Robin et de Marion*, states that the *chanson de geste* is "made up of a number of lines with the same rhyme, each of which is to be sung to the same tune." *New Oxford history of music*, ed., DoW. A. Hughes, Oxford University Press, 1954, vol. 2, p. 223.
harp. Since both these traditions had considerable influence on poetry after the Conquest, would they not also affect the method of performance?

Like the early verse chronicles the long narrative poems of the Middle English period have no extant music. On the other hand, as many of the poems were divided into "fits", there is a possibility that these breaks in continuity might suggest an oral presentation for they could indicate a place where the performer rested, supplied instrumental music for the audience's entertainment, or began a fresh melody. Of course such evidence does not give conclusive proof that the poems of this period were sung. Is it likely, however, that British poets, who had a long tradition of singing behind them, from both the Saxons and the French, would ignore their training and deliberately choose forms that were alien to them? Then, too, why is it that poems of a later date (about the thirteenth century) begin with words like "listen lordings", if the poems were not intended to be performed orally?

Possibly the chant-fable, part prose and part verse, like Aucassin et Nicolette, may represent the transition from an all-singing to an all-speaking manner of presentation. At any rate, it is certain, in the fourteenth century,

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13 Pattison, op. cit., p. 27.
romances were often recited, for Langland in his *Piers Plowman* states that there were "...iaperes and iogeloures and iangelers of gestes" and Chaucer, in the *House of Fame*, devotes a long passage to the description of "mynstralles" (those that played an instrument) and "gestiours" (those that wrote and told tales).

The medieval lyric (which owed its genesis largely to the troubadours of Provence) kept its music much longer than narrative verse. Although England does not seem to have been influenced by the troubadours to the same extent as France or Italy, after 1150 (when Eleanor became queen of England) many troubadour characteristics became apparent in the metrical forms of the English lyric. Moreover, like the troubadours on the continent, their English imitators expected their poems to be sung. This fact is made clear by the London Guildhall records of the thirteenth century, where, in the plans for the celebration of the Puy, the regulations specify that

E qe il ieit a les chauncouns juger eslu(ii) ou (iii) qi se conoissent en chant et en musike, pur les notes et les pointz del chant trier et examiner, auxi bien com la nature de la reson enditee. Kar saunz le chant ne doit on nie appeler une resoun endite chauncoun, ne chauncoun reale corounue ne doit estre saunz doucour de melodies chaunte.


15 Bk. 3, 11. 1193-1519.

16 Puy Notre Dame (near Saumur) had founded a sort of troubadour academy in the twelfth century. It was widely copied elsewhere, giving its name to similar institutions whose primary purpose was to hear songs and to honour the best of them.

17 Quoted by Pattison, *op. cit.*, p. 29. And that he, who is familiar with chant and
Further indication that the English medieval lyric was intended to be sung is supplied by the fact that fourteen of the ninety-one extant thirteenth century lyrics were accompanied by musical notation.

By the fourteenth century the lyric was still an elegant social form of art and still sung, for song played an important role in the stylized conventions of courtly love. According to these traditions\(^{18}\) every young gallant was expected to immortalize his mistress in songs of his own making. In the *Legend of Good Women*, for example, Chaucer states that he is going to

\[
\ldots \text{ seyn, as thynketh me,} \\
\text{This song in preysyng of this lady fre}^{19}. 
\]

while in the *Complaint D'Amours* he indicates that he is going to make the song:

\[
\text{This compleynte on seint Valentynes day,} \\
\text{Whan every foughel chesen shal his make,} \\
\text{To hir, whos I am hool, and shal alwey,} \\
\text{This woful song and this compleynte I make,} \\
\text{That never yit wolde me to mercy take}^{20}. 
\]

music, was directed to judge two or three chosen songs in order to sort out and examine the notes and points of the song, as well as the nature of the spoken sound. For without the chant neither must one call the spoken word song, nor must the prize winning song be without the sweetness of sung melodies.


\(^{19}\) The Poems of Chaucer, ed., F. N. Robinson, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933, F text. ll. 247-248. All Chaucer quotations are from this edition.

\(^{20}\) The authorship of this poem is doubtful but it is attributed to Chaucer in Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 637, ll. 85-88.
The suggestion that the lover made both the words and the music is in keeping with the early tradition that poet and musician were the same person.

In Celtic days these musician-poets were called bards, while in the Anglo-Saxon period they were known as scops or gleemen. From Widsith's account of the duties of a scop (in the final lines of his poem) it is evident that the scop (or gleeman) was expected, not only to recite or chant the traditional songs, but to compose, more or less extemporaneously, poems on new subjects.

Swã scribende gesceapum hweorfaê.
glœomen gumena geond grunta fela, ðearefe seçgæt, þongword spreçæt,
simle suð oppæ norð sumne gemætað
gydda gleawne, geofum unhnæawne,
sæ þe fore duguþe wile ðom äræræn
eoriscipe æfßnan, ðæ bet eal sceæced,
leóht and lif somod; lof sæ gewyrceð
hafað under heofonum hœahfaestne ðom.22

About the eighth century, a different kind of musician made an appearance. These entertainers were seldom composers, but were poor vagabonds who sang songs that others wrote, and performed tricks with trained bears or any other

21 These were terms for professional entertainers. The terminology is not at all clear but G. Reese thinks that "the scops were resident in the hall of an atheling..., while the gleemen travelled about". Music in the Middle Ages, p. 240.

22 Widsith, op. cit., p. 5, ll. 135-140. Thus wandering, they who shape songs for men Pass over many lands, and tell their need, And speak their thanks, and ever, south or north, Meet some one skilled in songs and free in gifts, Who would be raised among his friends to fame. Transl. found in A. S. Cook and C. B. Tinker's, Select translations from Old English poetry, 11. 135-139.
collaborator which might be at hand. With these performers the concept of musician-poet descended in dignity and came to be synonymous with merely light, professional entertainment. Out of this tradition came such terms as jongleur and juggler.

By the tenth century, a division of the entertainers into the play-acting, tumbling, conjuring jongleur (who was frequently condemned by the church and classed with epileptics, magicians, and prostitutes\(^2\)) and the jongleur de geste (the entertainer who recited the long, traditional or original, narrative poems recounting the deeds of national heroes, like the scops of old) was clearly discernible. The difference of social grade was marked by the introduction of a new term for the higher-class public entertainer, the musician class, that of ménestrier (akin to minister). Soon, ménestral\(^2\) or minstrel grew out of the latter word.

Necessarily wide differences of social importance existed even among the minstrels. There were humble wanderers, but also, there were those who approached their work seriously and were sufficiently talented and cultured to perform in good society. If one of these was fortunate he gave up his wandering for a position in a feudal household; if not, he


\(^{24}\) The words "mynestres" and "mynstrales" were both used in Piers Plowman, ed., W. Skeat, London, Trubner and Co., E.E.T.S., (Original Series), 1898, C text, No. 54, Passus VI, 1.60 and Passus III, 1.237.
travelled from court to court giving selections from his repertoire.

In the eleventh century there appeared on the continent a group of poet-musicians known as troubadours and trouvères. They were not wanderers but were often persons of rank who composed for their own circle of friends. The distinction between them was one of locality and language: the troubadours who flourished in Provence in southern France from the end of the eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth, used the langue d'oc, while the trouvères, located in northern France, employed the langue d'oil.

The art of the troubadour is said to have been introduced into England when Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry II. She had patronized the troubadours in Aquitaine and Northern France (Bernart de Ventadorn, who she took to Paris and possibly to England, had addressed to her many of his best songs) and she encouraged the poets of her new country to emulate their Provençal colleagues.

As Henry's court was the most brilliant in Europe it was the constant resort of troubadours from the continent. Among those to cross the channel were Bertrand de Born and possibly Chrétien de Troyes. The most famous of the English trouvères was Richard the Lion-Hearted, who has left us two examples of his work: a sirvente and an
exhortation to the Dauphin of Auvergne to join Richard's alliance\textsuperscript{25}.

These courtly minstrels composed their own words and music but did not always perform their own works\textsuperscript{26}. The maker of the words of a poem, then, had done only half his task until he had wedded a tune to his words. Some troubadours are spoken of as making good words and poor tunes, and \textit{vice versa}, but the significant fact is that they all had to provide both.

Although the musician-poet was still in existence in the fourteenth century the development of polyphony, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, made it more difficult for an amateur to set his own verses to music. He found that the polyphonic concept of music (more than one melody at a time) required new skills and specialized training. Thus, as we shall see, the \textit{ars nova} brought about the separation of music and poetry and ushered in a new era of specialization which resulted in the formation of a separate musical profession. As yet, there was no real literary profession. True, there were isolated men of letters who were protected by patronage, but poetry was still mainly in the hands of men who had other means of livelihood.

\textsuperscript{25} Rowthbothan, J. F., \textit{Troubadours and courts of love}, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{26} This occupation they left to the humble professionals.
Chapter II

If it should be asked, "What was the nature of medieval music that it could so wed itself to a text that neither the words nor the music was complete in itself?" it would be difficult to make an adequate answer, for, owing to the inadequacies of early notation systems, there is very little extant music. Nevertheless, it has been possible to gain some knowledge of its character from a study of the existing manuscripts and treatises of the period.

Medieval monody consisted of a single melodic line, which was very different from our modern melodies as many of the features necessary to modern composition (like time, key, and harmony) had not yet been discovered. Of course, rhythm has always been present in music (it seems to be one of the first instincts of human beings) but rhythm and time are not the same thing. For example, in the following rhythm

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\begin{array}{c}
\text{A} \\
\text{B} \\
\end{array}
```

the segments bracketed "a" and "b" are in the same rhythm

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1 This type of music is known as Monody.
and time, but the larger phrases marked "A" and "B" are in quite different rhythms although they are in the same time (that is, they take an equal time to play and are divided into bars of equal length with accents falling regularly at the beginning of each measure). As time signatures were non-existent in the Middle Ages composers followed the rhythm of the text to give shape to their melodies. Indeed, the power of joining many rhythms together by making them conform to one time is almost a new development, if one takes into consideration the number of years that man has made music.

Today when a tune is played or sung, people with an ear for music can quite easily hear simple chords to go with the melody, suggesting that it is in a certain key. In the Middle Ages, however, even talented composers, like Adam de la Halle, would have had difficulty thinking of the simplest chords, for they thought, not in harmonies, but in a melodic line which was written to conform to certain modes. These modes are not keys. The difference between one mode and another is not the kind of difference which exists between C major and D major, but rather that which exists between C major and C minor (that is, a difference of the arrangement of tones and semitones and hence, necessarily, of the width of some of the other intervals). What the four Authentic modes of St.
Ambrose\(^2\) sounded like may be heard by playing on the pianoforte octave scales of white notes beginning on D,E,F,G. Since the fifth and first notes were fundamental intervals\(^3\) it seemed natural, when there was a passage to be chanted, that the fifth of the mode was used for the reciting note and the first of the mode for a dropping of the voice, or cadence.

To the four Authentic modes were added another set of four (called by St. Gregory\(^4\) the Plagal modes). Each

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\(^2\) The modes received their name from St. Ambrose (340-397), Bishop of Milan, because, in the course of his reform of the ritual of the church, he fixed upon these four to be used in his music. His ritual is still employed in the archdiocese of Milan. G. Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 104ff.

\(^3\) The Greek philosopher, Pythagoras, and his pupils found that a definite numerical relationship existed between the notes of the scale. They found that, by keeping the tension constant, and varying the ratio of the length of the strings, they could produce various intervals: thus, the ratio of 2:1 gave the octave, 3:2 the fifth, and 4:3 the fourth. As a result, the Greeks attached special importance to these intervals (the "perfect" intervals of modern harmony). Medieval theorists, copying the Greeks, also regarded these as important intervals. Moreover, they used the existing Greek terms for their octave species: for example, diatessaron—the interval of a fourth, diapente—that of a fifth, and diapason—an octave. Macrobius, *Commentary, on the dream of Scipio*, transl. W. H. Stahl, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, p. 187ff.

Plagal mode was simply a new form of a corresponding Authentic mode. It was the same mode taken in another compass so as to lie between its former dominant and dominant (with the final in the middle). A piece in the Plagal mode would come to a close on the same final as a piece in the corresponding Authentic mode, but its range would be different. In order that the reciting note would not be at the bottom or top of the compass a new one was appointed, three notes below the old one. The whole series of modes may now be set forth as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Compass</th>
<th>Dominant of the Mode</th>
<th>Name of the Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>D - D5</td>
<td>(D) A</td>
<td>Dorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>A - A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Hypodorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>E - E</td>
<td>(B) C</td>
<td>Phrygian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>B - B</td>
<td>(D) A</td>
<td>Hypophrygian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>F - F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>C - C</td>
<td>(D) A</td>
<td>Hypolydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>G - G</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Mixolydian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>D - D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Hypomixolydian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 In looking at this diagram it should be clearly understood that modes are not a question of pitch. Any mode (whilst preserving the order of tones and semitones which give it its individual character) can be taken at any pitch. It is usual, however, to show the modes at what we might call their original pitches.

6 D was the original dominant of modes I, IV, and VI, but later it was changed to A; likewise, the B of mode III was changed to C. To avoid the interval of the augmented fourth (F-B) the B was often flattened, giving a new note. The B was not always shown in the notation as flattened, but singers were taught to introduce the ♯ on suitable occasions. When more and more accidentals (like F♯, E♭, and G♯) were added, the old modal systems began to break up and our modern scale system came into use. Part of this diagram may be found in New Oxford history of music, ed., Dom. A. Hughes, Oxford University Press, 1954, vol. 2, pp. 111-112.
The names of the modes were those of the ancient Greek scales\(^7a\). Unfortunately, the medieval theorists employed the old terms without understanding the Greek scale system; as a result, the nomenclature was entirely incorrect.

Nine hundred and fifty years after Gregory a Swiss monk, Henry of Glareanus, a friend of Erasmus, was studying and writing about music. He brought forth the theory (in his \textit{Dodecachordon}) that there should be twelve not eight modes, adding a mode on A (the Aeolian) with its plagal and one on C (the Ionian) with its plagal, four new ones in all\(^7b\). To some extent these new modes already existed, for composers had gone ahead of theory, but the plainsong of the Church was, and still is, restricted to the eight modes of Gregory.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{7a} There seems to be some doubt as to the origin of the names Dorian, Phrygian \textit{et cetera}. Most musicologists hold the view that the names are closely allied to the Greek theory of \textit{ethos}. It is interesting to note, however, that these names all represent ancient peoples. If we accept the theory that music began with singing and that all early melodies followed the inflexions of speech, is it not possible that these modes originally were developed from the speech inflexions of the district from which they took their name? To take a modern example, in the Chinese language the meaning of individual words is affected by the intonation, so that adult foreigners have difficulty in learning the language unless possessed of a quick ear. Since the characteristic idioms and intonations of their speech may be reduced to scales, is it not possible that the ultimate origin for any scale system may be found in the nation's speech inflexions? The idea for this hypothesis was given me by Curt Sachs' remark "music... descended from spoken language" in \textit{The rise of music in the ancient world}, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19.
  \item \textit{7b} Miller, H. M., \textit{An outline history of music}, New York, Barnes and Noble Inc., 1947, p. 38.
\end{itemize}
Although monody was not confined to any one class of musician, it was religious monody (referred to variously as plainsong, plain chant, Gregorian chant, and *cantus planus*) which had the most extensive repertoire and the greatest influence on later musical developments.

The term plainsong⁸ was applied to the large body of traditional ritual melody of the Western Christian Church. It was a translation of *cantus planus* in contrast to *cantus figuratus* (florid song, implying counterpoint added to the traditional melody) or *cantus mensuratus* (measured song implying the regularity of rhythm associated with harmonic music). The term "plain", then, may be taken in the literal sense of unadorned, and as obviously dating from the period when harmonic accompaniment to the Church's ritual music was beginning so that a distinction had become necessary.

The history of plainsong is of the highest interest. From Saint John Chrysostom we get some insight into the reason why music was introduced into the service.

When God saw that many men were lazy, and gave themselves only with difficulty to spiritual reading, He wished to make it easy for them, and added the melody to the Prophet's words, that

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¹⁸ The general characteristics of plainsong are: it is monodic, modal, unaccompanied, nonmetric, and uses a free prose rhythm following that of the text, which is in Latin.
all being rejoiced by the charm of the music, should sing hymns to Him with gladness.

As might be expected, all Churchmen did not approve of the introduction of music into the ecclesiastical ritual. True, there were a few, like Saint Augustine, who felt that music had a magic power capable of establishing relations with the Divine.

How greatly did I weep in Thy hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the voices of Thy sweet-speaking church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the truth was poured forth into my heart, whence the agitation of my piety overflowed, and my tears ran over, and blessed was I therein.

Many, however, agreed with the Egyptian Abbot Pambo who "deplored" the use of music in the service.

Woe is upon us, 0 son, for the days are come in which monks shall relinquish the wholesome food given by the Holy Ghost, and seek after words and tunes. What repentance, what tears proceed from hymns? What repentance can there be in a monk who, whether situated in the church or in his cell, lifts up his voice like a bulbul?

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Vocal execution, then, was early introduced into the service. As near as we can judge it was applied in three main directions: in the solemn reading of portions of the Gospels for which cantillation was used in accordance with established formulas; in psalm and hymn singing which ranged from cantillation to full-fledged song; and in ecstatic chanting of the single word Alleluia to colourful passages (this was probably derived from the liturgy of the Synagogue). At the end of the Alleluia, flourishes, known as the *jubilus*, were added to give variety to the service and expression to the emotions. Moreover, many practices from pre-Christian cultures were introduced at various times, as, for example, the Syrian use of Antiphonal and Responsorial chant.

There seems to have been no definite form for the service until the end of the fourth century when Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, made the first important effort to stabilize the Roman service. He recognized Latin as the official language of the Liturgy and fixed upon four modes to be used in the development of the ritual. Moreover, he is considered to be the father of hymnody in the Western Church. It is said that he introduced the hymns to "buoy up the spirits of his Catholic adherents" during their "fierce struggle with the Empress Justina and her *Arian* followers."

...At this time it was instituted that, after the manner of the Eastern Church, hymns and psalms should be sung, lest
the people should pine away in the tediousness of sorrow; which custom, retained from then till now, is imitated by many, yea, by almost all of Thy congregations throughout the rest of the world.\footnote{12}

At the end of the sixth century Pope Gregory is said to have taken the whole subject under review again. It is not known exactly what the nature of Gregory's reform was, however: in view of the tendency of medieval musical expression to progress from a stage of fluidity to one of stability it may be that his reform consisted to some extent in definitely associating particular melodic outlines with particular texts. As many of the chants were Hebrew in origin, it is possible that previously the Christians followed the Hebrew practice of using fluid melodic formulae that could be adapted to texts with varying number of syllables.

The introduction of the authorized plainsong into England took place in the time of Pope Gregory. Augustine, whom he sent to convert King Egbert and his subjects (597 A.D.), approached the king in the Isle of Thanet singing a piece of plainsong. Later, Augustine was created the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

Canterbury, the court of Egbert, and the See of

Augustine quickly became centres for the study of Gregorian plainsong. The Abbey of Wearmouth in Northumberland became another great centre when Benedict Biscop (628-690), its founder and a great traveller, brought John, Archcantor of Saint Peter's, from Rome to train the singers of the abbey in the practice of the Gregorian chant\textsuperscript{13a}.

At the time of the Norman Conquest attempts were made to introduce the French manner of singing. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (the Peterborough-Canterbury or "E" manuscript, which is very outspoken about Norman misdeeds) it is stated that in 1083 Abbot Thurston of Glastonbury stationed Norman archers in the clerestory and when rebellious monks persisted in singing in the way which they regarded as native and authentic, they were shot as they sang the holy office\textsuperscript{13b}.

The simplest form of plainsong began, one may suppose, from the natural tendency of a reader or speaker (especially in a large building) to utter his words on one note with some dropping of the voice at the end of the sentence or verse. Thus, plainsong rhythm was the "free" rhythm of speech, its irregular rhythm arising from the unmetrical character of the words to be recited -- psalms,

\textsuperscript{13a} Winfred, D., Church music in history and practice, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1937, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{13b} Ibid., p. 32.
prayers, and the like. As a result, plainsong melody was written to conform to the accents of the Latin text, melodic peaks coinciding with the most important accent of the words. Usually the accented syllable of each word was set to a higher note than the one that preceded it, following the speech-habit of slightly raising the pitch of the voice for an important syllable. Likewise, the musical period of the Gregorian chant adopted the natural tendency of speech to rise to its reciting note at the beginning and drop from it at the end of the phrase; that is, it is constructed like an arch with the phraseological accent at the peak. Sometimes, however, this law of accent must yield to the superior aesthetic laws of musical phrasing, modality, and rhythm.  

There were three styles of text setting: in the

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14 Gregorian composers quite often placed the phraseological accent at the height of a musical phrase without detriment to the tonic accent of single words. Sometimes, however, in an ascending progression in a melodic phrase the final syllable of a given word was placed higher than the accented syllable, thus disturbing the tonic accent for aesthetic purposes.

15 The place in the liturgy and the ability of the performers were the determining factors in the choice of style. For example, the chants used for ordinary (Ferial) days were much shorter and simpler than those used on Holy Days. Furthermore, those sung by the trained singers of the Schola and Choir offered more scope than those sung by the attendants surrounding the Bishop and the people of the congregation.
first, or syllabic style, each syllable of the text was set to one note of the melody;

\[ \text{Glória in excélsis Deo} \]

in the second, or neumatic style, although some of the syllables had one note, most had two or even three groups of notes;

\[ \text{Réquiem æternum dōna(etc.)} \]

finally, in the florid or melismatic style, a single syllable was set to many groups of notes, as in the Gradual and Alleluia.

\[ \text{Kyrie eléison} \]

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16 "Gloria", Missa De Angelis, Gregorian Chant Publications (Series 1) Boston, McLaughlin and Reilly Co., 1906, p. 5.

17 "Introitus", Missa pro Defunctus (Vatican version), Boston, McLaughlin and Reilly Co., 1907, p. 1.

18 "Kyrie", Missa De Angelis, op. cit., p. 4.
The four main classifications of chants are grouped according to their melodic and textual structure. To the first group, known as strophic compositions, belong hymns and sequences. In the conventional hymn there are a number of metrical stanzas each of which has the same literary structure. Whereas all the lines within a single stanza are not necessarily identical in rhythm and meter, the first line of one stanza will have the same rhythm and meter as the first line of the next stanza (and so on throughout the hymn). As a result, the melody of the first strophe can be repeated for all other strophes. In the following example by Saint Ambrose the lively tune (which is through-composed) matches the strongly marked rhythm of the words.

\[ \text{Ae-ter-na Chri-sti mu-ne-ra et mar-ty-rum vic-to-ri-as lau-} \]


20 Originally the hymns were governed by the laws of quantity not word accent, as in the following example:
Hymnum dicat turba fratrum, hymnum cantus personet,
Christo regi concinnantes laudes demus debitas.
tu Dei de corde Verbum, tu uia, tu ueritas,
Iesse uirga tu uocaris, te leonem legimus.

Later the hymns incorporated material from folk melody and based their texts on word accent.

Veni creator Spiritus
mentes tuorum usita
imple superna gratia
quae tu creasti pectora:

A special kind of hymn, the processional hymn, was distinguished by a refrain that was sung by the people at the beginning and after every stanza of the hymn. An example of this type of hymn is Theodulph of Orleans' *Gloria, laus, et honor tibi sit, Rex Christe, redemptor*, which is still sung as the processional "All glory, laud, and honour" on Palm Sunday.

The sequence is a little different from the hymn in that every two consecutive lines follow the same melodic pattern. In this form and in the hymn the melody takes absolute predominance over the text on which it imposes its own musical accentuation.

The second type, known as psalmodic plainsong, makes up the majority of the chants of the Mass and Office, their texts being drawn from the one hundred and fifty Psalms and the Canticles of the Old and New Testaments. The character of the psalmodic plainsong is best seen in

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22 Since the hymns came from the people they were not incorporated into the service until the ninth century.
the familiar psalm tone. Usually, there will be found an opening note or two (intonation), leading to a monotone (the reciting note) which is retained for some time and then merges into a cadence (mediation), whereupon, the monotone is resumed and another cadence (called the ending) closes the verse. The intonation is, in the Psalms, used for the first verse only.

Many pieces of psalmodic plainsong that are not marked by the comparative simplicity just described will be found on examination to circle round or touch frequently upon one special note (clearly the original reciting note), and then to drop to a cadence in some sort of florid figure. Such a figure is called a melisma.

The psalm-text consists of a series of unrhymed, non-metrical, double-verses. These double-verses (which usually balance each other in thought and structure) are
generally sung in alternation either by priest and choir (responsorial psalmody) or by two sides of the choir (antiphonal psalmody). The psalms can be sung directly, however, in which case the priest recites the psalm to one of the eight "psalm tones" which provide for every double-verse of the text a similar melody. In this type the choir usually sings a choral antiphon directly before and after the chanting of the priest. The following is a setting of psalm 146 with antiphon.

[note: musical notation follows]

Laudabo 1. Laudabo anima mea Dominum,

Laudabo Dominum in vita mea:

Psallam Domino meo quamdiu fure ro.

Antiphon

Laudabo Deum meum in vita mea.

23 Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 11.
In the third style there are no stanzas, but sections of free composition in which every phrase of the text must have its own melodic pattern.

Finally, the fourth type consists of chants that resemble monologues and dialogues in character, the monologue being sung by the celebrant and the dialogue by the celebrant and congregation or choir.

The repertory of plainsong is very large. The round of daily services includes:

1) The florid and beautiful chants of the Proper of the Mass, Introit, Communion, Gradual, Alleluia, and Offertory, the texts of which varied from day to day according to the season of the saint.

2) The settings of the Ordinary of the Mass, the texts of which did not vary. The following five passages, the Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, are of later origin than the psalmodic melodies and recitations.

3) The Antiphons for the Psalms and Canticles also the Responds of the Breviary.

4) The hymns from the same book.

5) The "eight tones" to which the Psalms and Canticles are sung.

6) The Preface tone.

7) All other chants that are needed to complete the service; for example, the Magnificat and the Te Deum. The Magnificat is the hymn of the

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24 These are the chants which are used in the Roman Catholic church today.

25 These are the congregational parts of the service.
Virgin Mary as given in the gospel of Saint Luke I 46:55. It forms part of the text of the service of Vespers in the Roman Catholic Church and is intoned to the "tone" of the Proper Anthem of the day. The Te Deum, which, like the Magnificat, has a prose text, finds a place in the liturgy of the church as the outpouring of praise at the moments of climax during the service of Matins on the occasion of festivals.

These chants form the musical settings for the various services of the liturgical year. The main chants sung in the Offices are usually the psalms, hymns, and special hymns like the Te Deum and Magnificat while the Mass, which is the central ceremony of the Roman Catholic church, consists of the chants of the Proper and Ordinary of the Mass.

The text of the Mass has two main divisions, with six subdivisions (or two acts with six scenes). Its usual disposition is as follows:

A  First main division of the Mass.
   I Preparation
   1) Introit
      This chant usually consists of an antiphon with one verse of a psalm and the Gloria Patri. It is sung at High Mass while the celebrant recites the preparatory prayers at the foot of the altar steps, or said at Low Mass by the Priest after these prayers.

   2) Kyrie
      The Kyrie followed by Christe elieson are each repeated three times to the same melody whereupon the Kyrie is again repeated, twice to the first melody and once to a new melismatic chant.

   3) Gloria in excelsis
      The Priest begins the chant which is then taken up by the choir or it can be sung by the
**II Instruction**

1) **Collect**
   - Read by the Priest. At a High Mass, the choir or congregation, or at a Low Mass, the Server, answers with the Amen.

2) **Epistle**
   - Either sung or read by the Subdeacon at High Mass or by the Priest at Low Mass.

3) **Gradual**
   - This chant also can be sung or read. When it is sung the soloist stands on the step (gradus) whence the Lesson is to be read. At Easter it is replaced by the Alleluia.

4) **Alleluia**
   - A Respond on the word Alleluia sung by soloist and repeated by choir. It is extended by a long jubilus on the final "a". At solemn occasions this is replaced by the Tract.

5) **Gospel**
   - Recited by the Priest.

6) **Credo**
   - A syllabic chant which is rendered on Sundays and certain feasts.

**B Second Main division of the Mass.**

**I Offertory**

1) **Sequence**
2) **Offertory**
   - A chant (usually neumatic) which is heard as the wafer is being prepared.

**II Consecration**

1) **Preface**
2) **Sanctus**
   - These words are intoned by the Priest and lead directly into the
   - Sung antiphonally between the Servers and the Choir. It is followed immediately by the

3) **Benedictus**
III Communion
1) Lord's Prayer Usually syllabic in style.
2) Agnus Dei Repeated three times; on the third repetition the melody is extended by a short coda to provide a suitable conclusion.

IV Thanksgiving
1) Communion antiphon
2) Ite Missa Est Short melismatic passage sung by the Priest²⁶.

Though most of the medieval music set to Latin texts belonged to the ritual of the church, there existed a large body of Latin songs that were non-liturgical in character.

From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the term conductus was applied to some of these Latin songs. Originally a trope used as an introduction to a liturgical ceremony, the conductus gradually came to be known as a song, with text in verse form, employed as a transition to a particular function. By the twelfth century it seemed to have lost its original meaning, for the texts could be religious or secular, grave or gay, while the music included forms that ranged from simplest hymn strophes to elaborate patterns²⁷.

As the Church was, without exception, the greatest

²⁶ This list was made from my knowledge of the Roman Service and from a study of two masses, Missa pro Defunctus, and Missa De Angelis, op. cit.
single force in the medieval world, it is not surprising to find that her music greatly influenced the secular music and literature of the period. From the simple music of the people to the sophisticated art of the troubadours and troubêres there is unmistakable evidence of church inspiration.

Although a music of the people existed side by side with that of the church in medieval England, the popular music did not fare as well as the sacred repertoire, for it did not have custodians, like the great choirs at Rome, Rouen, Metz, and Salisbury, to preserve it for posterity. Popular literature was kept largely in the memory of the people, who learned it by rote and then passed it on in a similar fashion. In transmitting the songs from mouth to mouth, lay singers undoubtedly felt free to change the melodies as they wished, and even to elaborate on them; as a result, it is almost impossible today to determine just what constituted the original song. Indeed, if it had not been for the goliards the popular songs of the Middle Ages might have been irretrievably lost.

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28 From the last half of the tenth to the thirteenth century vagrant students and men in minor ecclesiastical orders, known as goliards, roamed over Europe composing and singing songs on various subjects. Since these men possessed a certain amount of education they noted down some of their songs, with the result that their songs constitute the richest field for the study of the popular music of the Middle Ages. *Oxford History of music*, ed., P. C. Buck, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 200.
From the few examples that have been preserved it has been possible to establish the fact that medieval folksong tunes have many characteristics in common with ecclesiastical plainsong. They are, for example, frequently in the old modes (the Dorian and Mixolydian being common in England); the rhythms are often free, so that, when they are notated by modern scholars, measures of unequal value have to be employed; moreover, their tunes are purely monodic, there being very limited evidence of the existence of any folk harmony.\(^{29}\)

In the eleventh century these two powerful traditions (that of church and people) met in another form of music which was heard in the court and castle.

The troubadour and trouvère both exercised the same art, that of Poet-Composer. They developed the lyric especially, the praise of women being their principal subject. Every troubadour had his particular mistress to whom he expressed an idealistic devotion. But he also celebrated heroism, the greatness of princes, and national pride, took sides in political disputes, and preached crusades in song.

\(^{29}\) Giraldus Cambrensis alleges in his *Descriptio Kambriae*, that singing in thirds (known as gymel) was common in parts of Britain (but nowhere else in Europe) as early as the tenth or eleventh century. Transl. Sir Richard Colt Hoare for Everyman's Library, London, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1935, p. 74ff. Moreover, there is a twelfth century song from the Orkneys (in thirds) which is listed in Apel and Davison, *op. cit.*, No. 22b.
If troubadour songs are divided according to subject the main types are (1) *chanso*, a love song, (2) *sirvente*, a satirical poem, (3) *planh*, a funeral song on the death of a patron, (4) *tenso*, a dialogue or dispute, (5) *alba*, a dawn song, the parting of lovers, ("the word *alba* reappears as a refrain in each verse") (6) *pastorela*, the heroine is always a shepherdess, (7) *serena*, a lover longs for evening, to unite him with his beloved, (8) *comjat*, the troubadour bids his lady farewell, (9) *escondig*, the lover attempts to excuse his behaviour, and (10) *ballata* and *estampeda* — dance songs.

The text and melody were original except in the case of the *sirvente*, where the poet replied to another poem maintaining the same verse pattern and borrowing the tune. The melody, when written at all, was placed at the top of the page with the text of the first stanza written below the notes. Subsequent stanzas, following without music, were sung to the same melody.

Troubadour and trouvere songs have virtually the same characteristics. They are notated on staves, but few employ time values. That the melodies had a definite measured music seems certain, for many are dancing songs and would necessarily have to be performed with a regular beat (possibly some form of triple meter). Since old

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French is accentual it is generally believed that the music must have followed the stress of the words rather than any fixed rhythmic pattern. This may account for the fact that musicians did not feel the need to indicate the time values in their notation.

Pour conforter ma pesance fais un són.

It is probable, too, that they employed retrograde analysis in determining the mode, though the whole problem of troubadour rhythm is still a question for discussion.

The influence of the church may be seen in the troubadour forms of music, which, far from being primitive, anticipate practically all later song forms. As there was no sharp line of demarcation between sacred and secular melodies it was not unusual to find a troubadour setting his love songs to liturgical melodies. This adapting of vernacular poems to melodies of Latin pieces was known as *contrafactum*.

The musical forms used by the troubadours and trouvères may be grouped in four main classes: those deriving from the litany, the rondel, the sequence, and the hymn\(^3\).

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To the litany-type (that is, those songs which repeated a melody over and over) belong the chanson de geste, the strophic laisse, the rotrouenge, and the chanson avec des refrains. The text of the chanson de geste (an epic chronicle based on the adventures of heroes like Charlemagne and Roland) was composed of a number of \textit{unequal paragraph-like sections called laisses}\footnote{Gérold, T., \textit{La musique au Moyen Age}, Paris, Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1932, p. 82.} or tirades. As the lines in these sections were usually of equal length throughout and were not arranged into repeated stanza patterns or strophes, it was simple to set the lines to a recurrent tune. At the end of the laisse a cadential formula (ending in a full close) was either sung or played on an instrument. The following illustration is taken from \textit{Le Jeu de Robin et de Marion} by Adam de la Halle.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.pdf}
\caption{Example of a chanson de geste laisse.}
\end{figure}

Au-di-gier, dist Raim-ber-ge, bouse vous di\footnote{Gérold, T., \textit{La musique au Moyen Age}, Paris, Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1932, p. 82.}.

In the foregoing example each section consisted of a number of lines of equal length which were sung to the same melody.

The strophic laisse (a short lyric form developed from the chanson de geste) had a repeated melodic formula with a divergent line as a conclusion or coda thus,
aaa... b, while the rotrouenge had the same formula but repeated the divergent line (which may have been sung by the audience as a refrain).

Rotrouenge

1) Pour mon cuer re-le-e-cier Vueil u-ne chan-çon
2) Chan-ter vous vueil sanz ten-cier D'u-ne mult de-bon
3) Que j'ai-me de cuer en-tier Or dont dex qu'il i
4) Cer-tes ja de li a-mer ne se-rai las
   nai-re, 5) Se li cous de-viot a-voir brui-siez les bras
   pai-re.

4) Car ele a tres-tout mon cuer pris en sez laz. 33a.
5) Si a-vrai je de sa fa-me mez de graz. 33a.

The chanson avec des refrains, as its name implies, had a number of refrains, a different one being sung after each stanza.

To the dance-type belong the rondeau, virelai, and ballade. Very often these forms were written for soloist

33a Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 19h.
(possibly the leader of the dance) and chorus. The *rondeau* set to a six-lined text had the musical pattern $a\ A\ ab\ AB$ while those with eight lines had the formula $AB\ a\ A\ ab\ AB$\textsuperscript{33b}, that is, the refrain was repeated at the beginning and close of the composition. Here is an example of this type.

**Vos n'aler (Rondeau)**

In the above illustration, stanzas 1, 4, and 7 constitute the "A" refrain while stanzas 2 and 8 are the "B". If, however, the song retained the refrain at the beginning and end (like the foregoing example) but employed a new melody for each of its verses (however many there were) except the last one (which anticipated the melody of the refrain) it

\textsuperscript{33b} The capital letters indicate the part sung by the chorus (refrain) while the small letters indicate the soloist's part.

\textsuperscript{34} Apel and Davison, No. 19e.
was called a *virelai*.

E, dame jolie (Virelai)

---

E, dame jolie (Virelai)

---

From the *virelai* came the three principal *ballade* forms. In the first type, AB cd cd ef AB, the refrain was omitted from the middle section of the *virelai* and new material was

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35 Apel and Davison, No. 19f.
substituted (ef); in the second, AB cd cd e ab AB, new material (e) was inserted before the refrain in the centre part; finally, in the third variety, ab ab cd E, the introductory refrain was omitted altogether. Here is an example of the third type.

Douce dame (Ballade)

From the sequence-type (one melody for every two lines) came the lai, estampie, and strophic lai. Although the lai was patterned after the ecclesiastical sequence, aa bb cc, it was unlike the sequence in that the ending of the second

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[Apel and Davison, No. 19c]
versicle could vary a trifle from the previous phrase, for example, the first phrase could have a half close at the cadence while the second had a full close\textsuperscript{37}. A reinforced lai may be represented thus: \textit{aa bb cc dd ee ff/\textit{gg hh}} and the 
\textit{strophic lai} as a \textit{bb cc d}, or simply \textit{a, a, b, a}.

Since the \textit{vers} and \textit{chanson} were derived from the hymn their music was through-composed. In the \textit{chanson}, however, a repeated passage was placed before the section resembling the hymn, thus: \textit{ab ab c}.

\textsuperscript{37} For examples of the various kinds of \textit{lais v.} Apel and Davison, No. 19.
Chapter III

Although monodic music had reached maturity in three great traditions, those of church, court, and folk, it was the music of the church which had the greatest influence on literary developments in medieval England.

Oddly enough it was in the field of drama, towards which the church had formerly shown such hostility, that one of the first manifestations of its influence was felt.

It is fairly obvious that the two elements necessary for drama, dramatic action and dialogue, are present in embryonic form in the ecclesiastical rites. The dramatic tendencies of the Christian worship becomes obvious to anyone attending High Mass, for it is an essentially dramatic commemoration of one of the most critical moments of Christ's life (a miracle re-evoked); likewise, the great festivals of the Christian year lend themselves readily to dramatic

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1 In Roman times the most popular theatrical entertainments were the performances of mimes in which coarse humour and indecency combined to secure the attention of the vulgar. With the rise of Christianity this type of theatre ran into difficulties. "The Church objected to its association with paganism, to the fact that, in its lower forms, it often ridiculed the new religion, and perhaps most of all to the immorality of both performances and performers." Baugh, A. C., ed., A literary history of England, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948, Bk. I.
presentation. For example, on Palm Sunday, on the Monday or Tuesday and the Wednesday in Holy Week, and on Good Friday, the reading of the Gospel narratives of the Passion often resolves itself into a regular oratorio. Moreover, particular episodes in these Passions are appropriate for special dramatic action. On Wednesday in Holy Week, for example, at the words \textit{Velum templi scissum est} the Lenten veil, which, since the first Sunday in Lent, had hidden the sanctuary from the people, is dropped to the ground.

The other important element of the drama, dialogue, was present in the practice of antiphonal and responsorial singing. "In fact, it has been suggested that the first impulse leading to the development of ecclesiastical drama was to be found in the antiphonal chanting of dialogued scenes in the Gospels by the early Syrians\textsuperscript{2}".

Since the medieval artists added both text and music to the established liturgy with great freedom\textsuperscript{3} it

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{2} Reese, G., \textit{Music in the Middle Ages}, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{3} About the ninth century singers began the practice of embellishing the chants of the mass (\textit{Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei}, and \textit{Introit}). The first stage in this development seems to have been the insertion of melismas before, after, or between the words of an already existing plainsong: the second, the setting of words to them (apparently to make the memorization of the florid passages less difficult). \textit{New Oxford history of music}, p. 128-129.
\end{flushright}
did not require much ingenuity to take the next step and actually dramatize the tropes that had dramatic content. The germ of the earliest drama is apparent in the tropes to the Introits for Christmas and Easter. One of the most significant of these tropes was the *Quem quaeritis* which dealt with the coming of the women to Christ's tomb and with the conversation that went on between them and the angel who stood guard there. It begins thus:

\[
\textit{Quem quaeritis in sepulchro,}
\]

\[
(0) \text{ Chri- sti- co- lae?}
\]

\[
\text{Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae.}
\]

\[
\text{non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.}
\]

\[
\text{ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.}
\]

(Apparently this trope was acted on Easter Sunday for)

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5 "It first appears in two tenth century manuscripts, one of Saint Gall and the other of Saint Martial". Facsimile of the original St. Gall manuscript found in *New Oxford history of music*, vol. 2, p. 178.
the *Concordia regularis*, written in the latter half of the tenth century "by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester," gives a description of a performance of this trope as "part of the third nocturn at Matins on Eastern morning":

While the third lesson is being chanted, let four bretheren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument and the women with spices coming to anoint the body of Jesus. When therefore he who sits there beholds the three approach him like folk lost and seeking something, let him begin in a dulcet voice of medium pitch to sing *Quem quaeritis*. And when he has sung it to the end, let the three reply in unison *Ihesu Nazarenum*. So he, *Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis*. At the word of this bidding let those three turn to the choir and say *Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus!* This said, let the one still sitting there and as if recalling them, say the antiphon *Venite et videte locum*. And saying this, let him rise, and lift the veil, and show them the place bare of the cross, but only the cloths laid there in which the cross was wrapped. And when they have seen this, let them set down the thuribles which they bare in that same sepulchre, and take the cloth, and hold it up in the face of the clergy, and as if to demonstrate that the Lord has risen and is no longer wrapped therein, let them sing the antiphon *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*, and lay the cloth upon the altar. When the antiphon is done, let the prior, sharing in their gladness at the triumph of our King, in that, having vanquished death, He rose again, begin the hymn.
**Te Deum laudamus.** And this begun, all the bells chime out together.6

As the popularity of the trope increased it was made more elaborate: the text was expanded to include the apostle scene of Peter and John and the scene between Mary Magdalen and Christ in the Garden while the use of church vestments gave a dramatic character to the performance. Later, another character was introduced. This was the spice merchant from whom the Maries stopped to buy the spices for Jesus' burial. At first, he was a "persona muta" but in the fourteenth century he became a speaking character and very often introduced an element of comedy. Finally, the Thomas episode was added, thus completing the drama of the Resurrection.

The scope of the music, too, was widened to include metrical hymns and sequences. When these additions were not merely choral overtures but were inserted into the dialogue itself they had a special significance. If the metrical hymns, for example, were in the form of a planctus or lament and were sung at an emotional crisis in the drama (when the Maries approached the sepulchre or when the women knelt at the foot of the cross) they added greatly to the humanity and dramatic intensity of the play. Probably the most important insertion of all was the Victime paschali. Originally written as an Alleluia sequence it was introduced into the Quem quaeritis about the thirteenth century.7


7 Loc. cit.
Another important day in the life of Christ became the occasion for the staging of plays, for the twelve days of Christmas became just as significant as Easter in forming a drama. Like the Easter drama, the Christmas play grew out of a trope, this time the *Quem quaeritis in praesepo pastores, dicite*. Later, it was absorbed into a drama belonging to the Epiphany, known as *Tres regis* or *Stella*. In the simplest version (which is from the Anglo-French monastery of Saint Martial) the three kings enter the church singing, show their gifts, then, seeing the star, follow it to the high altar where they offer their gifts while an Angel announces the birth of Christ. The play ends with the exit of the kings to the sacristy.

Like the Easter drama the *Stella* received several additions. One of these new episodes was the slaughter of the innocents by Herod's soldiers. Another addition, known as the *Ordo Prophetarum*[^9] is interesting because it owes its origin to a chanted *lectio* instead of a trope. In this sermon several prophets are called to give witness to the birth of a Saviour. Later versions added pagan witnesses like Virgil and the Sibyl. The prophecy which the Sibyl sings in these dramas is the famous *Song of the sibyl*, considered to be the oldest song that has come down to us in a decipherable form. Here is a tenth century version:

Besides these plays that grew out of the two great seasons of festivity, there were other Latin plays which were in a sense liturgical, for they were performed during intervals in the service. In this group, noteworthy examples are the **Play of the image of Saint Nicholas** and the **Saint Martial Sponsus**. Since these plays use local dialect extensively in their text they may have served as transitional forms. The **Sponsus** (a tale of the Foolish Virgins) opens with a Latin chorus **Adest Sponsus qui est Christus**, after

10 Quoted by G. Reese, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
which the angel Gabriel addresses the virgins and warns them in four French stanzas to expect "un epos, Sauvaire a nom". Each stanza has a refrain which was probably sung chorally:

...gaire noi dornet!
Aisel espos que vos hor atendet!

The lyric dialogue, in which the Fatuae try to get oil from first, the Prudentes, then from some Mercatores, is in Latin, but it has a French refrain, "dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit." The whole drama, with the music of the introduction recurring in the Epilogue, presents the pattern of the reinforced lai.

Since the liturgical dramas were chanted the calibre of the music determined, to some extent, the dramatic intensity of the plays. When, for example, there were frequent repetitions of the same strophic melody (as in the case of some of the Saint Nicholas dramas\textsuperscript{12}) the play became dull and uninteresting; on the other hand, if an attempt at individuality or expressiveness was made (as in the part of Mary Magdalene in a twelfth-century Resurrection drama or the lamentation of Rachel in the Massacre of the Innocents\textsuperscript{13}) then the play became more vivid to the imagination and more appealing to the emotions.

\textsuperscript{11} This melody imitates the sequence with double cursus, that is, it follows the pattern aa bb cc, bb cc dd, \textit{New Oxford history of music}, p. 213.

\textsuperscript{12} Reese, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 196.

\textsuperscript{13} Both these illustrations are mentioned by T. Gérold in \textit{La musique au Moyen Age}, pp. 62 and 63.
Although texts of the liturgical period are rare there is no reason to doubt that England had its full share in the early development of religious drama. As the observance of the liturgy was more or less the same in all countries of Europe, the developments within the service were bound to be of a universal rather than a local character. The scarcity of surviving texts can be accounted for by the destruction of liturgical books at the Reformation.

By the thirteenth century, the liturgical drama in Europe had reached its full term of development and was overshadowing the sacrificial and devotional rituals. Not only were the extended dramas intruding on the service but they were attracting such large crowds that the churches were unable to accommodate all those that desired to see the plays. Moreover, these crowds were demanding more secular incidents in the plays with the result that the devotional quality of the dramas decreased as their popularity increased. When the plays became too unseemly for the holy precincts they were moved outside, first to the church yard and then to the market place.

In England, in the fourteenth century, clear discrimination between ritual plays and performances out of doors is shown, as in Robert Manning's *Handling synne*:

```
hyt ys forbode hym, yn þn þe decre,
Myracles for to make or se;
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..............
He may yn be cherche burgh pys resun,  
Pley be resurreccyun 14.

Once the plays were in the market-place and in competition with other forms of entertainment the strict Latin would give way to the vernacular. This transition is apparent in the Shrewsbury fragments where the words of the speech are at first sung in Latin and then spoken in the vernacular. The celebrated Prose de l'ane may be quoted as an example of this trend.

Hez, Sir As- ne, hez15.


15 Apel and Davison, Anthology of Music, No. 17a.
Late in the twelfth or early in the thirteenth century the festival of Corpus Christi was established by the Church. In this celebration the leading ceremony was a great procession in which the host, escorted by civic and religious dignitaries, was borne through the street and displayed at various stations along the route. When it became the custom to perform dramas on this date rather than at Easter the plays became more or less attached to this procession.

In England the plays performed on Corpus Christi day took the form of great processional cycles. In these cycles the action was divided into a number of independent scenes each of which had its own moveable platform. Since these stages were mobile each scene could be performed at several stations along the processional route.

The characteristic English cycle was given annually under the superintendence of the corporation of an important city, while the separate scenes were usually the special charge of one or more of the local guilds. Such cycles can be studied in the records of Chester, York, Beverly, Coventry, Newcastle, Lincoln, and Norwich.

The cycle of plays produced at York is interesting

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16 As Corpus Christi was two months after Easter the weather was more suitable for outdoor performances.
because it is the most complete of the extant English cycles. It covers the whole of the Bible stories, from the Expulsion from Paradise to Christ's ascension, the death of Mary, and the Judgment Day. As some of the episodes are extremely energetic and humorous these plays are often good theatre. Noah's wife, for example, animates the play of Noah and the flood, with her humour, while, in the Play of the shepherds, vernacular is introduced.

York influence is apparent in the small group of Towneley Plays. The most important work in this collection (which is generally attributed to a talented fifteenth-century writer, known as the Wakefield Master) is the Secunda pastorum.

Owing to the lack of evidence it is difficult to determine how the craft cycles were performed. Most critics have concluded that the musical rendering used in the liturgical drama gave way to the more realistic spoken word. But many of the plays are written in an elaborate stanza form, which, in the lyric, suggested the presence of music. Of course, these forms might have been unfunctional and archaic even at this date. Charles Davidson, however, postulates that the northern septenar stanza was originally sung to the accompaniment of the harp in a recitative.

17 Baugh, op. cit., p. 280.
delivery. He extends this theory and suggests that the plays, which at York and Wakefield were based on this septenar stanza, were chanted, not in the style of plainchant, but rather to a monotonous tune similar to the type which accompanied the old ballads. If the dialogue were chanted in this manner it would account for the presence of minstrels, whom the manuscripts of the plays and the account books of the guilds describe as being present at the performances. Of course it is possible that the minstrels were used for other purposes than accompanying the plays for they could have been used in the announcements of the plays (for these seem to have been versified like the plays themselves), between scenes, or at the conclusion of the play. At the end of the Digby Purification play, for instance, the Epilogue speaks to the audience thus:

Also ye menstralles doth your diligens
A-fore our departynge geve vs a daunce.

This admonition might be a cue for a jig like those which were common in the Elizabethan drama. The custom probably arose from the practice of singing at the conclusion of the liturgical dramas, where the end of the play often coincided with the Introit.

Although it is impossible to prove that the cycles

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were intoned there is enough music surviving in the plays to indicate that it was an important feature of their presentation. The Chester cycle, for instance, has twenty-three songs in fourteen different plays, while the Towneley cycle has eighteen songs in eight plays, and the York, twenty-seven songs in twelve plays.

The polyphonic type of music that was becoming popular in aristocratic and professional circles was not reflected in the mysteries to any great extent. True, there are a few examples of part-singing, one of which is the three-part song of the Wakefield Shepherds, in the Towneley play *Alia eorundem* (II) where the shepherds display a remarkable professional knowledge of part-singing:

Primus pastor. Lett me syng the tenory
iijus pastor. And I the tryble so hye.
iiijus pastor. Then the meyne fallys to me
lett se how ye chauntt20.

Another example which may be cited is the song at the conclusion of the *Una pagina pastorum* (I) in which an obvious reference to descant singing is made:

Amen, to that worde syng we therto
On hight;
To Ioy all sam,
With myrth and gam,
To the lawde of this lam
Syng we in syght21.

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Usually, however, the music was of a familiar nature, such as Latin sequences and antiphons borrowed from the liturgy. There were certain conventions as to where these songs were sung. The antiphon, *Ascendo ad patrem meum*, for instance, was always sung by Christ at the culmination of the Ascension play. The sequence *Veni, Creator Spiritus* was usually sung by the two angels in the descent of the Holy Ghost, while the *Gloria in excelsis* was sung either by or to the shepherds in the Nativity plays. Examples of vernacular song were also present. In the Chester plays of the Deluge, for instance, rowdy Mistress Noah and the good gossips sing in their cups, *Here is a pottell of malmsy*.

If the cycles are closely examined one finds that their music is not incidental but serves as a structural element in the play, foreshadowing a similar use in the Interludes and later Academic Comedies, the parts of which were outlined by musical insertions\(^\text{22}\). The same general principles are found in the English cycles. In the *Alia eorundem (II)*, for example, the three-part song of the shepherds marks the end of the Introductory passage dealing exclusively with the shepherds, and prepares the way for the Mak farce. In a similar fashion, the *Gloria* separates the play within a play and a strain of music.

marks the finis.

Moreover, the music of the play is used as a subtle means of emphasizing the character of the players: the "good" people of the drama, the shepherds and the Angel, sing in a musicianly style, while the comedy character, Mak, enters to off-key singing and sings his lullaby in a manner that is indistinguishable from Gill's groaning.

Thus, the mystery cycles, which were evolved from music, through the liturgical drama, are structurally dependent on their sister art.
Chapter IV

The lyric is the closest of all the arts to music. Originally composed to be sung to, or accompanied by, the lyre it gradually came to mean poetry of the simple type of personal expression that lent itself to, or suggested, song. As a result, it has many characteristics in common with its sister art. Sound and rhythm, for example, are essential to both music and poetry. Moreover, just as the word acquires its full meaning only as a member of a sentence group, so the note of music only becomes comprehensible when it belongs to a musical unit, like the phrase. While it is possible to say that the line resembles the musical phrase it cannot be said that end-rhyme fulfills the same function as the cadence. If a tune, for instance, is comprised of two phrases of equal length in the order A B, the first phrase ending in a half close and the second in a full close, then there is no reason why the lines could not rhyme aa or ab.

It is interesting to note, however, that the process of the gradual purification of end-rhyme probably was related to the development of music. The earliest lyrics of the Middle Ages, for example, employed the litany principle in their presentation, that is, each line had the same melody and returned to the same fundamental cadence point, usually the half close. In the course of time the single tonality of the melody could have led to the practice of constructing
stanzas of indefinite length based on one particular final vowel, thus introducing the simplest form of rhyme, assonance or monorhyme aaa....

Similarly, when the sequence form was developed, it would not take an enterprising poet-composer long to discover the artistic advantages that the sequence (with its change of melody every two lines) offered, and apply the same principle to his end-rhymes. This theory is given some confirmation by the fact that the earliest poems employing the two-rhyme principle, like Sunset on Calvary\textsuperscript{1}, are in the form of the distich, aa bb, which is an exact reproduction of the sequence.

Later, a third line was added which probably was a development from the "tag" that accompanied nearly all sequences. In the early stages it ended in the "a" vowel in order to conform to the Alleluia chant which generally preceded the sequence.

Laetabundus
exsultet fidelis chorus,
Alleluia;

Regem regum
intactae profudit thorus;
Res miranda\textsuperscript{2}.

\textsuperscript{1} Brown, C., ed., \textit{English lyrics of the thirteenth century}, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1932, p. 1. All English medieval lyrics quoted in this chapter are from this edition unless it is stated otherwise.

When other vowels were employed the tercet, aab, or rime couée of Robert Manning of Brunne resulted. Judging by the number of poems written in this style it must have been one of the most popular forms in the Middle Ages. Two examples are The Prayer of the five joys and Gaude Virgo Mater Christi.

The practice of interlacing rhymes marked a revolution in the melody of verse, for it introduced the simultaneous application of two different melodic patterns. The probable source for this type of poetry was the hymn, especially the processional hymn. The strophes of these ranged from bipartite structure, like ab ab (as in Lucis creator optime), to longer ones like ab cdcd (as in Lustra sex qui iam peractis). Some contained melodic sequences, that is, (repetition in another register) while others employed sameness of cadence. As the hymns used most of the rhyme schemes employed in the Middle Ages there is at least a possibility that they were the major source for the quatrain type of rhyme. They are also responsible for the specialized form aaab (common in the carol), the "b" line coming from the cauda of the Latin hymn.

It cannot be stated with any certainty when, or how, these types were introduced into England. Although Edwin Guest contends, in his History of English rhythms, that

3 Brown, op. cit., pp. 27 and 32.
4 London, G. Bell and Sons, 1882, p. 117.
asonantal rhyme was present in all older poems of the Welsh and Irish from the sixth century, about all that can be said with any certainty is that, by the thirteenth century, Robert Manning of Brunne reported, in his translation of Peter Langtoft called the Chronicle of England that four kinds of rhyme were in existence.

I made it not forto be praysed,  
Bot at bo lewed men were aysed,  
If it were made in ryme couwee,  
Or in strangere or interlace,  
bat rede Inglis it ere inowe  
bat couthe not haf coupled a kowe,  
bat outhere in couwee or in baston  
Som suld haf ben fordon,  
So bat fele men bat it herde  
Suld not witte howe bat it ferde5.

Examples of the various types of rhyme used in England may be found in the following thirteenth-century lyrics: the
tercet and couplet (abb ab) in I walk with sorrow, (No. 8),
two tercets (abb ccb) in Stabat iuxta Christi crucem, (No. 14),
and a quatrains and tercet (abab bbc) in Now comes the blast of winter, (No. 7).

The structure of the stanza, too, depended on the form of the music. On the whole, Middle English stanzas followed the rules set down by Dante; he declared that

... every stanza is set for the reception of a certain ode; but they appear to differ in the modes (in which this is done); for

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some proceed throughout to one continuous ode, that is, without the repetition of any musical phrase, and without any diesis; and we understand by diesis, a transition from one ode to another: (this when speaking to the common people, we call volta). There are some stanzas which admit of a diesis and there can be no diesis in our sense of the word unless a repetition of one ode be made either before the diesis, or after, or both. If the repetition be made before the diesis, we say that the stanza has feet; and it ought to have two, though sometimes there are three; If the repetition be made after the diesis, then we say that the stanza has verses. If no repetition be made before (the diesis) we say that the stanza has a fronte; if none be made after, we say that it has a Serma or Coda.

The following examples should make this clear.

Lylie-whyt hue is,)
hire rode so rose on rys,)
pat reueb me mi rest.
wymmon war & wys,
of prude hue bereb pe pris,
burde on of pe best.

bis wommon woneb by west,
brihtest vnder bys;
heuene y tolde al his,
pat o nyht were hire gest.
(No. 78, 11. 31-40)

II

On leome is in bis world ilden,
per-of is muchel pris;
a-risen is god & pat is rist
from depe to lif.

Al for ure redempciun
He polede pine & passiun,
Derne wnden & greue;
He broutte to saluaciun
be world bat was ibrot adun
þuru adam & eue.

(No. 24, 11. 1-10)

III

Of a mon Matheu þohte,
þo he þe wyngord whrohte-
ant wrot hit"on ys boc-
In marewe men he sohte,
at vnder mo he brohte,
ant nom ant non forsoc.

At mydday ant at non
he sende hem þider fol son
to helpen hem wip hoc.
huere foreward wes to fon-
So þe furmest heuede ydon-
ase þe erst vndertoc.

(No. 80, 11. 1-12)

A few poems like The Lovliest Lady in Land are characterized by a refrain:

Ichot a burde in boure bryht
þat fully semly is on syht,
menskful maiden of myht,
feir ant fre to fonde;
In al þis wurhliche won,
a burde of blod & of bon
neuer þete y nuste non
Lussomore in londe.

Blow, northerne wynd,
sent þou me my suetyng!
Refrain
blow; norperne wynd,
blou! blou! blou!

(No. 83, 11. 1-12)
The model for this type was to be found in the processional hymn which had a refrain that the people sang at the beginning and after every stanza. Since the origin of the hymn was popular it is possible that the hymn and the carol (which is so like it in form) may have received their inspiration from some ancient folk-practice which made use of the refrain.

The strophes themselves are based on the musical form of the hymn and sequence. A glance at the structure of the music and verse of *Death's wither-clench* will make this clear:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{A} & \\
\text{B} &
\end{align*}
\]

Man--mei lon-ge him li- ves we--- ne,-ac of-te-
Fair we-der of-te him went to re--- me,-an fer-li-

him--li-
che-ma-
ket is blench, bar-vo-re, man, pu be bi-

bench - al sel va-lu-i be gre-ne, wel-a-wey! nis
In this ten-lined stanza the composer has used the sequence form AA and two new sentences B and C. The A sentence consists of two phrases. The first or "a" phrase (from bar 1, to bar 5) is built around the tonic chord but ends with a suggestion of a half close, the "b" phrase (bar 5 to bar 9) is made up of two strains, the first of which circles around the third and root of the tonic chord (from bar 5 to 7) and is then repeated in the second strain (bar 7 to bar 9) a second lower but with a slight alteration so that it can end with a perfect cadence. The B sentence is divided into four phrases. The beginning of the first phrase (bars 10, to 13) is similar to bars 1 and 2 in construction but then, instead of moving up to the tonic, the melody descends immediately to the dominant (which in the modernization is suggested as a modulation to G major). The second and third phrases

(from bars 14, to \(21\frac{2}{2}\)) make up a new melody which ends in a half close. Although the final phrase (bar \(21\frac{3}{2}\) to \(25\frac{2}{2}\)) begins differently from the "c" phrase its concluding three bars are the same (with the exception of the two eighth notes, instead of the quarter note, on A to accommodate the extra syllable in the words). The final sentence, C, uses material from the sequence section, for example, its last seven beats repeat the last seven beats of the A section (again with the exception of the two eighth notes, instead of a quarter note on D).

The form of the music affects the structure of the verse in several ways. First, the parallel construction of the sequence section is duplicated in the first two sets of couplets, for they are identical in rhythm, meter, and rhyme. Secondly, the marked rhythm of the B section \(\text{d} \text{d}\) is imitated in the strong meter of the words. Thirdly, the extra syllables of lines 9 and 10 are not noticed because the music smooths out the difficulty by using short notes for the extra syllables. Finally, it is interesting to note that the composer felt compelled to put a cadence wherever the "b" rhyme occurred, for example, the "b" rhyme and the perfect cadence coincide in both the A and C sections, while, in the B section it comes at the half close.

Whereas this particular example has two repeated
musical sentences and two different ones, there is no reason why there should not be a new phrase for every tercet or couplet, in which case it would be following the hymn pattern. An example of this type is the *Dies irae.* Here the melody is through-composed like the hymn, but the internal structure of the poem is similar to the parallel construction of the sequence. Its form may be illustrated thus:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
& A & B & C & D & E & F & G & H \\
\text{aa} & \text{bb} & \text{cc} & \text{dd} & \text{ee} & \text{ff} & \text{gg} & \text{hh} & \text{ijkl}
\end{array}
\]

A number of the poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth century are based directly on the melodies and practices of the church. Saint Godric's hymns, *Criste* and *Sainte Marie* and his *Hymn to the Virgin,* may be classed as examples of this type. Godric claimed that these hymns were divinely dictated, but more likely they are settings of the liturgical chants to which they are set in the manuscripts\(^8\).

Previous to the appearance of Godric's hymns there developed a song, *In Rama sonat gemitus,* that made reference to the life of Thomas à Becket. It became very popular and inspired many other antiphons on the same topic. There is

\[\text{MISSA PRO DEFUNCTIS, OP. CIT., P. 5.}\]

\[\text{FACSIMILE OF THE LATTER MS. IS REPRODUCED AS A FRONTISPICE IN SAINTSBURY'S HISTORY OF ENGLISH PROSODY, NEW YORK, MACMILLAN CO., 1906, VOL. I.}\]
one, An antiphon of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which must have been sung to the "Gloria", for the "eovvae" that stands at the end of the English version represents the vowels of the last two words of the Gloria Patri, "saeculorum. Amen" and were commonly used as an abbreviation.

(No. 42, 11. 9-10)

An illustration of antiphony introduced into the structure of the verse may be found in the fourteenth century Est memor mortis. In this poem the poet divides his lines into English and Latin as though for two choirs.

Syth alle þat in þys wordle hap been in rerum natura,  
Or in þys wyde wordle was seen in humana cura,  
Alle schalle passe wyþ-outen ween viam mortis dura;  
God graunte þat mannys soule be cleen penas non passura  
Whan bow leste wenys, veniet mors te superare;  
Þus by graue grenys, ergo mortis memorare.

In the second stanza he reverses the order and begins with the Latin:

Vnde vir extolleris, þow schalte be wormes mete,  
Quí quamdiu vixerís þy synnys wolte þow not leten;

Another poem to introduce church practices into the

framework of its verse is Sunset on Calvary. Here the exact parallelism of the lines immediately calls to mind the rhythm and structure of the psalmodic chants.

Nou goth sonne vnder wod,  
me reweth, marie, pî faire Rode.  
Nou gob sonne vnder tre,  
me reweþ, marie, pî sone and þe.  
(No. 1, ll. 1-4.)

Many of the early lyrics are direct translations of Latin sequences and hymns. One of the earliest of these is the translation of the Stabat iuxta Christi crucem.

Stabat iuxta Christi crucem,  
Stabat videns vitae ducem  
Vitae valefacere,  
Stabat mater nec iam mater  
Et, quid sit eventus ater,  
Novo novit funere.  
(No. 4, ll. 1-6.)

Although the first four stanzas of the English translation are missing it is still easy to see that the following example is very close to the original sequence in meter and stanza pattern.

þat leueli leor wid spald ischent,  
þat feire fel wid s(cur)ges rend  
þe blod out stremed oueral.  
Skoarn, upbraid, and schome speche,  
al hit was to sorhes eche-  
i þoa þu was biluken al.  
(No. 4, ll. 1-6 of translation)

Other direct translations from church sources in the thirteenth century were Gabriel's greeting to our Lady (No. 44), which is a translation of the sequence Angelus ad
virginem, and *A Hymn to the heavenly Father* (No. 59), based on the metrical paraphrase *Orationes dominicae*. The Latin text of the former is accompanied by music in the Arundel Manuscript.

In the fourteenth century appeared *A Song of the five joys* (No. 31) which is based on the well-known hymn *Primum fuit gaudium*, and *Gloria laus et honor* (No. 14) taken from Bishop Theodulphus' hymn of the same name. *A Prayer by the five joys* (No. 122), *A Prayer to be delivered from the deadly sins* (No. 123), and *A Prayer for three boons* (No. 124) were actually written for parts of the Liturgical service.

Besides the many internal evidences that the medieval lyric was associated with ecclesiastical music there is also historical evidence that the church was an important force in the shaping of the lyric. From time to time, during the Middle Ages, she endeavoured to popularize her teachings by making use of certain pagan elements in her service. In the thirteenth century, for example, Saint Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, is said to have initiated the idea of instituting a sacred minstrelsy to free religion from the chill of the cloister and the enigma of the Latin language.

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11 The last five poems are in Carleton Brown's *Religious lyrics of the fourteenth century*. 
The Franciscans landed in England early in the thirteenth century and speedily attained popularity. The first of their number to make his appearance in extant English poetry was Thomas of Hales, author of a *Love Ron* (No. 43). This love song to Christ expressly acknowledges the purpose of turning a liking for song into profitable ways (l. 198 to end of the poem). More extensive is the poetry of William Herbert\(^{llla}\), whose work consists, for the most part, of translations of hymns, antiphons and other parts of the service and is an attempt to introduce vernacular versions of the hymns into his preaching. If these were written to replace the words of some light and worldly song, then their structure must have been greatly influenced by the music for which they were written.

In the thirteenth century there were also a few songs whose music reflected the tone of a more pagan era. The melancholy quality, which is one of the characteristics of Anglo-Saxon poetry, is well illustrated in this example, *Worldes blis*.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Worldes blis ne last no throwe Hit wit and}
\end{align*}\]

\(^{llla}\) Brown, in *English Lyrics of the fourteenth century*, lists Nos. 12-25 as being written by William Herbert.
wendi away anon. The leng-gur that hich hit

i know-e, The lasse hic fin-de pris

ther on. For all hit is i-meynd wyd kare.

Mid sor-rewe ant wid u-uel far-e. Ant at the

las-te pou-re ant bar-e, Hit let mon wen hit gin-

net a-gon. Al the blis-se this he-re ant the-
The sadness of the text is repeated in the melody, which is in the Dorian mode (that is, the mode which most closely resembles our "minor" key). The composer has achieved this melancholy effect in the music by weaving his melody around the notes that form the interval of a minor third, (from the "G" up to the "B♭" and from the "F" down to the "D") and by having a predominantly descending melody. The last phrase (which descends from middle "C" to "D" before forming the final cadential pattern) is particularly effective in this respect.

All songs were not sad or religious in the pre-Chaucerian period, for there were gay, lively pieces, like Alysoun, (No. 77), Lenten is come with love to town (No. 31), and The man in the moon (No. 89). Indeed the spirit of the period may be characterized as that of Sumer is icumen in (No. 6):

Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu!
Groweb sed and bloweb med
and sprinb pewde nu.
Sing cuccu!

12 Apel and Davison, No. 23b.
Awe bleteb after lomb, 
lhoub after calue cu,  
Bulluc stertep, bucke uertep.  
Murie sing cuccu!  
Cuccu, cuccu,  
Wel singes pu cuccu.  
ne swikpu nauer nu!  

Sing cuccu nu, Sing cuccu!  

Pes  
Sing cuccu, Sing cuccu nu!  

Although this remarkable composition is not monophonic, but a quadruple canon over a two-part pes, it has been included because the gaiety of the words gives true expression to the light-hearted side of medieval poetry. There are all too few of these delightful love lyrics with their sprightly rhythms and unusual, gay "major" moods which are in striking contrast to the "minor" modal melodies of the religious lyrics.

The period which opened with the fourteenth century was one of importance in the history of the arts. It saw musicians, for the first time, turning to discuss the music of the people "along with the dignified chant of the Church". The result was that poems which depended on dance rhythms increased in popularity and poets of the new age were eager to try out new forms. There were two genres reflecting the new mood that attained popularity at this time, namely, the carol and the ballad. Although most of the manuscript copies

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13 Johannes de Grocheo was the first to draw scholar's attention to the growing secular art, for, in his Theoria he discussed secular music in a scholarly work. Sach's A short history of world music, London, Dennis, Dobson Ltd., 1949, p. 101.
for these poems date from the fifteenth century the forms must have been in existence before that time because Chaucer and his contemporaries make frequent mention of them in their works. As the structure of both the carol and the ballad is dependent on music, like the earlier lyrics, they have been included in this section rather than in the chapter on the fifteenth century.

The medieval carol, according to W. J. Phillips, was derived from a dance form which had its origin in the pagan ring dances of "pre-Christian" peoples. The division of these early dances into leader and chorus probably resulted in later dance songs, like the French carole, being divided into verse and burden. It is this type of song that seems to be the immediate predecessor of the English carol.

Although the carol may have had a popular origin, it is to the church that it probably owes its development. If it had been a popular form only, it would have been transmitted by oral tradition, which would have brought about variants of music and text. But the carol is derived from written

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14 The carol, for example, is mentioned by Chaucer in The romant of the rose, in lines 744-5, 754, 759, and 781. Since both Chaucer and Langland knew of the legendary figure of Robin Hood there were presumably widely circulating ballads about him as early as the mid-fourteenth century.

copies. The fact that a great many of them were found in liturgical manuscripts surely implies that they were used as optional insertions in the liturgy. Whereas they could not substitute for the solemn chants of the service they could undoubtedly take the place of the simple ones of the Office.

Moreover, the liturgical quotations within the carols themselves attest to a clerical atmosphere, for the principle of providing a new context for a well-known phrase is the same as the one which underlay the production of the tropes. It is distinctly a "monkish" device. An example of this principle may be found in the following carol, where, in two stanzas, there are no less than four quotations from well-known hymns:

Make we joye nowe in this fest,
In quo Christus natus est.
Eya!

I
A Patre vnigenitus
Thorw a maiden is com to vs,
Synge we to here and sey, "Welcome!
Veni redemptor gencium."

III
A solis ortus cardine,
So myghty a lord was none as he,
For to oure kynde he hath yeue gryth,
Adam parens quod polluit.

(No. 31)

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16 Greene, R. L., ed., The early English carols, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1935, pp. 325-350. In these pages Greene gives a comprehensive list of the contents of the manuscripts that contain carols (for example, the Harley No. 275, p. 326). All carols quoted are from Greene's collection.
Finally, the two men who were most closely connected with the carol in the fifteenth century were both churchmen. The first, James Ryman, was an active member of the Franciscan Order. He seems to have been a prolific writer of carols, for Greene's collection contains 119 of Ryman's poems in this form. The other name to appear on early manuscripts was that of John Audelay, chaplain in an Augustinian house. He has 24 carols in the same collection, two of which (numbers 7 and 117) are listed as being accompanied by musical notation. Of the sixteenth century composers of carols Richard Smert, Gilbert Banister, and William Cornish were connected with the Chapel Royal.

For the medieval writer the carol was distinguished by its form rather than its subject. If the examples in Greene's work are analysed the carol may be defined thus: a song on any subject with an undetermined number of uniform stanzas with a prefix of one, two, or more lines called the burden, which consistently alternates with the verse.

Although it did not seem to matter how many lines there were in a carol (as long as the stanzas were uniform) the greatest number of those printed in Greene are based on a four-lined stanza17 rhyming aaaa (No. 331), aaab (No. 295)

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17 There were exceptions of course, Nos. 203, 218, 230, and 328 being examples.
or abab as in this example from Ryman.

Syng we alle thys tyme thus:  
"Te Deum laudamus."

I  
Fadere of Blisse omnipotent,  
For thou hast made and create us,  
Mekeley therfore with on assent  
Te /Deum laudamus./

(No. 293)

When the writer used a "b" rhyme for the fourth line he was often copying the end rhyme of the burden. Further correspondence between burden and verse is observable in the practice of repeating one of the lines of the burden as the final line of the verse. For example, in carols No. 288-302 the last line of the burden is repeated for all stanzas while in No. 303 the first line of the burden is the repeated line in the stanzas.

The essential feature of the carol's structure, the burden, does not seem to be necessary to the meaning of the text for in many of the carols the same burden is employed over and over again. The words

Singe we alle this tyme thus:  
"Te Deum laudamus."

or their variant

Nowe syng we thys tyme thus:  
"Te Deum laudamus."

are used, for example, no less than seven times, in carols No. 289, 293, 295, 296, 297, 298, and 299.
The usual form of the burden is this two-lined structure. Sometimes, however, the burden is a single line as in carols No. 221-226, and No. 336 or four lines as in No. 218 and 387, or (more rarely) three lines as in No. 443, while in carol No. 432 the first four lines of the burden are imitated with a slight variation on the repeat.

This day day dawes,
This gentill day day dawes,
This gentill day dawes,
And I must home gone.
This gentill day dawes,
This day day dawes,
This gentill day dawes,
And we must home gone.

Here the change in the wording seems to furnish proof for M. Bukofzer's contention that in any repetition of the burden the "first statement of the burden was performed by a soloist or by a group of soloists one voice to a part and the repeat by a choral group...(more than one singer to a part)"

Musically the carol seems to be related to the processional hymn, for not only do both forms have a burden repeated after every verse but they use a different musical setting for the burden and stanza. Such similarities can hardly be coincidental.

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The musical form of the carol is varied and complex. Sometimes they are monophonic as in this example attributed to Ryman.

More often they are written for two, three, or four voices. Here is an example of a two-part carol (with the option of a third voice in the burden) of the sixteenth century.

say, and ask mercy while

say, and ask mercy while

Versa.

thou may. Man, have in mind how

thou may. Man, have in mind how

here be fore for thy misdeed thou were for

here be fore for thy misdeed thou were for
The minor quality of this lovely melody is a fitting setting for the words. In the burden the composer achieves his effect by the use of predominantly minor or diminished harmonies throughout (there being only six major chords in the whole twelve bars). At the cadences, moreover, he did not use the usual full close of dominant to tonic but employed the more melodic one, of a diminished chord on the leading

note resolving into the tonic (in which the third is omitted). The use of this type of tonic chord as the first and last chords of the burden (which is reminiscent of early organum) establishes the minor mood of the carol that would have been destroyed if the major third had formed part of the chord. The rhythm of the melody is also very effective; in bars 8 and 11, for example, the composer reverts to a syncopated rhythm to give a lingering effect on the word "mercy" and at the cadence.

The verse consists of three musical phrases (a new phrase for each line of the text) whose cadential formulas are similar in rhythm (bars 16 to 17, 20 to 21, and bars 24 to 25) and one phrase marked chorus which repeats the music of the last two bars of the burden.

Many of the carols do not show the comparative simplicity displayed by this illustration. Number 10 in the same volume, for example, has two burdens, the first being written for a soloist and the second for three voice-parts. The pattern of the carol, moreover, does not follow the usual order of burden, verse, burden......burden. Here, verse one (for two voices) is followed immediately by verse two (for three voices) after which the two burdens are heard. In No. 30 a section for three voices (which is marked chorus) breaks into the pattern of the verse three times. The first and third of these insertions begin like the burden but do not repeat it exactly for variations occur towards the
end; the second interpolation is composed of new material. Finally, in No. 25, in bars 24 to 30 of the verse section, the top two voices, singing an identical melody, form an imitative pattern (canon) with the second voice.

In these last three examples, the gay, rhythmical music parallels the forthright words of the text.

The ballad, like the carol, is designated by a term that suggests the dance. There is danger, however, in laying too much stress on the lexicographical association of the word, for the early British ballads do not seem to have the characteristics that are usually associated with dance songs. Most forms that have their origin in the dance, like the French carole, for instance, are lyrical in character, but the English ballads are narrative, with the story being given at the climax of events. Moreover, the question and answer technique found in some ballads (which is usually cited as proof that they originated in the dance) is not present in the earliest recorded ballads, Judas and Saint Stephen. On the contrary, these early specimens show the strophic forms and basic meters arising from the music and hymns of the medieval church. If Child's

21 Pound, L., Poetic origins and the ballad, p. 102.

chronology is correct, then the oldest ballads have an ecclesiastical stamp and, like the carol, are an attempt to popularize Biblical teaching. Indeed, C. J. Sharp suggests that it would not be difficult to make a ballad a carol or vice versa\textsuperscript{23}. Since many examples, like \textit{Little Sir Hugh} and \textit{The cherry tree carol}, are on the borderline between the ballad and the carol, they may be related types. If this premise is correct, then, the early ballads are closer to the religious lyrics, in form, than to heroic poetry or romance.

This theory is borne out by the fact that the structure of the older ballads varies a great deal from that of the more recent ones. The stanzas of the older texts, for example, are in couplets, each line having seven main stresses, while the later ballads are usually in a four-lined stanza, the first and third lines having four main stresses and the second and fourth having three main stresses. It would seem, then, that the earliest ballads probably had an ecclesiastical origin, for their parallel structure definitely suggests the chanting formula of the liturgy. When the ballad became a popular form\textsuperscript{24}, however, the long lines were


\textsuperscript{24} When the ballads became secularized they passed into the hands of minstrels who incorporated in them many of the legends of the romances. As a result, many similarities with the Breton \textit{lais} (Tam Lin, for example, like Launfal and Guigemar, being carried off to the Otherworld by a fairy queen) and motifs from the romances themselves (like the sympathetic plants springing from the lover's grave) are present in the ballads.
divided to make the style lighter and more lilting for popular appeal.

There are other types of stanza than the quatrain or seven-stress couplet to be found in Child's collection of ballads, for a third of his examples are in couplets of four-stress lines. Possibly these are quatrains whose second and fourth lines, representing a kind of refrain, have been lost because the early editors were not interested in the music, and consequently, neglected to include these lines in the poems, thinking they were unimportant. So many of our ballad tunes have been irredeemably lost through neglect.

Ballads lived for the most part in the memory of the people and were passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. Since there would be many changes in the course of a tune's transmission, no printed ballad (except those collected since scientific folksong study began) reach us quite in the form they were originally fashioned. Miss Gilchrist gives a good description of the process of change in a tune in her essay for the English Association.

A new ballad coming into currency would not be sung to a new tune. The singer often brings to the new words some tune he already knows and so makes them acquainted. Often the tune brings with it some of the words—perhaps only the refrain the singer already associates with it, which may have no relation whatever to the new ballad. The contact of tune and words results in the adaptation of the one to the other. Sometimes one,
sometimes each insensibly yields something of its rhythm or stretches or contracts its line of melody, and before long the pair settle as it were into place, and the old tunes may then be halfway towards a new one. 

Although it is impossible to trace the original music to these ancient narratives with any certainty there is plenty of evidence to suggest that certain popular tunes were regarded as typical "ballad tunes". In the Roxburghe ballads (which represents the most comprehensive collection of sixteenth and seventeenth century ballads in England), for example, each ballad of the first volume is headed with the name of the tune to which it was sung.

It seems fairly certain, also, that each stanza of the ballad was sung to the same tune, just as, for instance, the twelfth century plays on the miracle of Saint Nicholas consisted of frequent repetitions of the same melody. It would be absurd to ridicule the supposed monotony of this procedure, for if the real beauty of the ballads is to be appreciated they must be performed in the same manner in which they were presented in the Middle Ages, that is, they must be sung. Although ballads cannot be considered merely as poetry, or as music, their basis was musical rather

25 Quoted by A. Keith in "Scottish ballads, their evidence of authorship and origin", English Association Essays and Studies, 1926, No. 12, pp. 100-119.

than poetical and the simple features of their poetry were engendered by a tune. Whether the tune was original or not, hardly matters; what does seem to matter is that the poetic process was that of a singer-poet rather than a poet-singer.

If the tune is the fundamental basis of the ancient ballad, it would account for the fact that the lilt and expression of the tune is reflected in each and every stanza of the ballad and that the metrical and expressive details of the words and music are closely connected. Moreover, it would probably explain the characteristic repetition (or nearly so) of corresponding lines in succeeding stanzas, like, for example, these lines from Sir Patrick Spens:

0 lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
0 eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

0 lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

(No. 58 of Child's collection, ll. 33-40.)

The ballad tunes are not so impressed with modal influences as many of the folk-songs, or it may be that the Dorian and Ionian modes are definitely noticeable in the old ballad tunes. The Cruel Mother, for instance, is in
the Dorian mode while *Little Sir Hugh*²⁷ lacking the seventh can be either Ionian or Mixolydian. As the Ionian mode is the same as our modern major scale and the Dorian has a certain affinity with our minor scale the tonality of these ballad tunes hardly ever suggests any archaic quality to the modern ear. Of course, it is possible that they have been so modified by succeeding generations that all traces of modal influence have been destroyed.

From the foregoing remarks it seems fairly certain that

No one who has not heard ballads sung can have a just appreciation of their effectiveness. Ballad melodies, ... not only contribute greatly to their appeal but by their slow tempo and leisurely movement allow each stanza to work its influence on the listener²⁸.

Ballads were never intended to be read.

²⁷ *English folk songs, op. cit.*, No. 13 and 8.
Chapter V

Just as one style of music, monody, unified music and poetry into one entity, so another style, polyphony, brought about their separation.

Like many other forms that cannot be explained satisfactorily because of lack of evidence, organum\(^1\) (as early polyphony was called) has evoked much speculation about the reason for its appearance. One of these theories relates early organum to the fact that the natural pitch ranges of the four classes of human voices lie approximately a fifth away from one another (in consecutive order from bass to soprano). Since the congregation that sang the responses at service did not consist of trained singers it would be natural for tenors and basses and women and boys to sing in ranges which they found comfortable, thus unconsciously producing a simple organum. In a few words, then, organum probably originated in the desire of the singers to sing a tune simultaneously at a different part of the octave.

The simplest type of polyphony is called strict organum. The rules for making this harmony were very simple. The original plainsong was called the vox principalis;

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\(^1\) Organum made its appearance about the ninth century. The earliest stages of its development took place before the ars antiqua of the twelfth century.
to this might be added a second part - the *vox organalis*
a fourth or fifth lower.

a) **Organum of the fifth**

b) **Organum of the fourth**

Furthermore, the *vox organalis* could be doubled in the octave
above and the *vox principalis* in the octave below. This type
is called **composite organum**.

c) **Composite organum**

Independence of parts was achieved when the *vox organalis* remained stationary but the *vox principalis*,

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2 Apel and Davison, *Anthology of Music*, No. 25a₂.
beginning at unison progressed upward until the interval of a fourth was reached, when both voices moved in parallel fourths until the cadence where they again moved to unison.

\[\text{Rex coe- li Do- mi- ne ma- ris un- di- so- ni}\]

The next step was towards rhythmical independence, which was gained in the *melismatic* style of organum. Here each note of the plainsong melody was sustained (tenor) while the other voice part moved in free contrapuntal style.

d) *Melismatic Organum*

When this style of writing was introduced composers had to find a satisfactory basis for keeping the different, simultaneous parts of the music together in performance. This was effected by the development of a measured music which had its basis in the six rhythmic modes derived from the Greeks. That is, at first, the musical time values

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5 Apel and Davison, *Anthology of Music*, No. 25\text{b}_2.

6 *Ibid.*, No. 27\text{b}.
used for metrical texts were the ones required by the meter of the text. Thus, a trochaic text would have required the pattern \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\ddagger} \), which came to be the first rhythmic mode; an iambic text, the pattern \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \) the second mode; a dactylic text the pattern \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \) the third mode; an anapaestic text, the pattern \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \) the fourth mode; a spondaic text, the pattern \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \) the fifth mode; and finally, a tribrachic text, the pattern \( \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \text{\textdagger} \) the sixth mode.

Obviously these rules would only apply to texts set one syllable to a single note of music. But, how was the rhythmical mode to be indicated in a part having no text or in a composition where more than one note to a syllable was to be used? To meet these difficulties medieval theorists developed a scheme of note-shapes (not unlike our modern system). In the early days there were four such shapes:

a) double long |, b) long |, c) breve |, d) semibreve •. Each of these is theoretically the third or half of the preceding one — according as 'perfect' or 'imperfect' time was used (that is, what we should call 'triple' or 'duple' times). Later, ligatures were devised to bind into a unity a rhythmic or melodic group of syllables. Thus, the mensural system was brought about by the requirements of polyphonic music.

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7 The time values of these notes may be lengthened or shortened. New Oxford history of music, pp. 319-320.
The introduction of measured rhythm into the music of the church is particularly associated with the school of Paris which was very active during the building of the great Notre Dame cathedral (hence the name, Notre Dame School). It is interesting to note that some French authors like Amédée Gastoué believe that the advance in French music at this time may have been due to the presence in Paris of a large number of British students, such as Giraldus Cambrensis, (a Welsh cleric, who, in *Descriptio Kambriae* gives a great deal of information about music), Walter de Odington, (the first British theorist), and John of Salisbury (another cleric who was interested in the influence of music on morals)\(^8\).

Paris was for a period a very active centre of theoretical discussion and of practical experiment for it was at this time that the Notre Dame school evolved new forms of polyphony including the *clausula* and the *conductus*.

Different from *organum* (which used an entire plainsong as the cantus firmus basis) the *clausula* used a melismatic section from a chant (like the Alleluia) for the *cantus firmus* tenor. To this were added one or two contrapuntal parts in faster-moving note values. All the parts were sung without text or possibly played on instruments. Here is an example from the Notre Dame School. It begins thus:

\[\text{Gastoué, A., Les primitifs de la musique française, Paris, Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1922, p. 18f.}\]
The polyphonic conductus used a freely composed tenor (that is, it was an original melody rather than a pre-existent one). All parts, which could be as many as four, moved in a more or less uniform rhythm. The text, which was in Latin, was normally metrical. It is characteristic of one class of conductus, however, that at points of structural importance, such as the beginnings and ends of lines or stanzas, all the parts simultaneously broke out into melismas of their own.

9 Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 28e.
10 Ibid., No. 38a.
Later in the century these forms were evolved into the most important of all forms in early polyphonic music, the motet (which is generally called the Paris motet to distinguish it from the later Renaissance motet). In general, the motet had a pre-existent melody (broken up into reiterated rhythmic patterns) for the lowest voice while the other parts moved in quicker note values above it. The texts which were different for all parts, were at first in Latin but eventually secular texts were used\textsuperscript{11}. As multiplicity of text was particularly characteristic of the motet it becomes obvious why this type could not possibly be used to convey a story; the music was all important.

Another polyphonic form of the thirteenth century was the rondel, which was a three-part song, each of whose phrases was sung through thrice. At every repetition the singers changed parts, thus opening the way for the contrapuntal devices of imitation and canon.

The \textit{ars nova} of the fourteenth century represents a general freeing of style from the old influences of organum and conductus. A greater variety of rhythm, more shapely melodic curves, and more independently moving voice parts were the marks of the new style.

There are two factors, then, in the development of

\textsuperscript{11} Although the tenor had a text in Latin, it is possible that it was often performed on an instrument, for Apel and Davison list a motet for instruments (No. 32e) which has the same plainsong indication that No. 32d has, "In Seculum".
polyphony which brought about the independence of poetry: (1) melodic independence of the voices; that is, a departure from strict parallel motion of two or more voice parts, and (2) rhythmical independence, where two or more notes in one voice-part are sung to one note in the other parts. As long as polyphony remained in strict parallelism there was little clash of text and music. On the other hand, when melodic and rhythmic independence were established composers could no longer use music as a vehicle for words. As a result, a new type of poet appeared in the fourteenth century; one who wrote poetry according to rhetorical and metrical rules rather than musical ones.

Although the new poets were more literary in their outlook than those of the preceding centuries they did not completely detach their poetry from the influence of music. They still recognized the close affinity of the two arts, but at the same time insisted that each had an interest of its own.

These principles can be traced in the works of Chaucer, the Pearl poet, and Langland. The rebellion against the old artificial forms of verse based on music, for example, is illustrated by Chaucer's experiments with rhyme royal and the five-stress stanza and the return to the old alliterative forms in the Pearl and Piers Plowman while the traditional relationship of the two arts survived in the poets' knowledge of music and the use they made of
Geoffrey Chaucer was born about 1340. Whether or not he was a musician cannot be determined because of lack of evidence. But from certain entries in the Royal Household accounts it seems probable that Chaucer spent his early years as a squire in the Royal Household. Since music was part of the seven knightly probitates\textsuperscript{12}, then it would seem likely that Chaucer as a squire would have had some training in music.

Although it cannot be proved conclusively that Chaucer was skilled as a musician it is known, from internal evidence in his works, that he was keenly interested in music. He never lost an opportunity of describing or alluding to its general use and of bestowing it as an accomplishment upon the pilgrims and the heroes and heroines of his several poems. It was to the tune of the bagpipes that the Miller brought the company out of town, the young squire "... koude songes make and wel endite\textsuperscript{13}", and well could the friar "...synge and pleyen on a rote\textsuperscript{14}"; and

... in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,  
His eyen twinkled in his heed aryght\textsuperscript{15}.

\textsuperscript{12} The seven probitates, according to Chaucer's description of the squire in the "General Prologue" of the Canterbury tales 11. 80-100, included the ability to dance, follow musical notation, read and compose verse, serve food and wine, to take part in jousts and war, hunt and understand falconry, and finally to perform court duties adequately.

\textsuperscript{13} "General prologue", Canterbury tales, I, (A), 1.95. This and the next four quotations quoted by C. C. Olson, "Chaucer and the music of the fourteenth century", Speculum, 1941, vol. 16, pp. 72-77.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 1. 236.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 1. 266-267.
The Pardoner "ful loude he soong 'Com hider, love, to me!'" while "this Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun". The Prioress sang the divine service "Entuned in hir nose ful semely", and told the moving tale of the little choir-boy singing "Alma redemptoris Mater". Absolon, in the Miller's tale, sang a descant to a tune that he played on the fiddle, while rivalling the young squire as a songster was Nicholas who had

... a gay sautrie,
On which he made a-nyghtes melodie
So swetely that all the chambre rong;
And Angelus ad virginem he song;
And after that he song the kynges noote.
Ful often blessed was his myrie throte.

If Chaucer was not a musician himself, he certainly displayed a remarkable knowledge of many phases of the art. It is true that he showed little familiarity with theoretical writers, Boethius and Pythagoras being the only ones to hold any interest for him, but there are many passages which seem to indicate more than a layman's knowledge of music. One example is his discussion of "physical nature of sound" in the second book of the House of fame (ll. 765-823). Here are five lines from the extract:

16 "General prologue", Canterbury tales, I, (A), ll. 672-673.
17 Ibid., l. 123.
18 Miller's tale, I, (A), ll. 3213-3218. Quoted by Olson, op. cit., p. 78.
19 Olson, op. cit., p. 71.
Eke, whan men harpe-strynges smyte,
Whether hyt be moche or lyte,
Loo, with the strok the ayr tobreketh;
And ryght so breketh it when men speketh.
Thus wost thou wel what thing is speche.\(^{19a}\)

Another instance is his use of the medieval theory of the
music of the spheres, once in the **Parliament of fowls**:

Thanne shewede he hym the lytel erthe that here is,
At regard of the hevenes quantite;
And after shewede he hym the nyne speres,
And after that the melodye herde he
That cometh of thilke speres thryes thre,
That welle is of musik and melodye
In this world here, and cause of armonye.\(^{20}\)

and once in **Troilus and Criseyde**:

His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holughnesse of the eighthe spere,
In convers letyng everich element;
And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
The erratik sterres, herkenyng armonye
With sownes ful of hevenyssh melodie.\(^{21}\)

Of course, such statements may only be an indication
of Chaucer's wide reading, for Robinson (in his notes)
suggests that the theory expressed in the passage on physical
sound was well-known in the Middle Ages and could be found in
"Boethius' *De Musica*, Bk. i (especially chaps. 3 and 14).\(^{22}\)"
Moreover, it is possible that Chaucer knew of the singing
of the spheres from Macrobius': **Commentary** (with which he
was familiar) for it makes a statement on the harmony of the

\(^{19a}\) *House of Fame*, ll. 777-781.

\(^{20}\) ll. 57-63, Olson, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

\(^{21}\) Bk. V, ll. 1808-1813.

\(^{22}\) *The poems of Chaucer*, p. 892.
spheres thus:

... a Siren sits upon each of the spheres, thus indicating that by the motions of the spheres divinities were provided with song; for a singing Siren is equivalent to a God in the Greek acceptance of the word. Moreover, cosmogonists have chosen to consider the nine Muses as the tuneful song of the eight spheres and the one predominant harmony that comes from all of them. In the *Theogeny*, Hesiod calls the eighth Muse Urania because the eighth sphere, the star-bearer, situated above the seven errant spheres, is correctly referred to as the sky; and to show that the ninth was the greatest, resulting from the harmony of all sounds together, he added: "Calliope, too, who is preeminent among all".

All his knowledge of music did not come from books, for there are several poems in which he exhibits a lively interest in the technical side of music. In this extract from the *House of fame*, for example, Chaucer not only gives a comprehensive list of the instruments of his day, but he describes the various kinds of musicians as well.

    Ther herde I pleyen on an harpe
    That sowened bothe wel and sharpe,
    Orpheus ful crafte, And on his syde, faste by,
    Sat the harper Orion,
    And Eacides Chiron,
    And other harpers many oon,
    And the Bret Glascuron;
    And smale harpers with her gleeßs


Thou saw'd I stonden hem behynde,
Afer fro hem, al be hemselfe,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden lowde mynstralcies
In cornemuse and shalemyes,
And many other maner pipe,
That crafelye begunne to pipe,
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many flowte and liltyng horn,
And pipes made of grene corn,
As han thise lytel herde-gromes,

Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
Pipers of the Duché tonge,
To lerne love-daunces, sprynges,
Reyes, and these straunge thynges.
Tho saugh I in an other place
Stonden in a large space,
Of hem that maken blody soun
In trumpe, beme, and claryoun;
For in fight and blod-shedyng
Ys used gladly clarionynge.

Moreover, the last four lines just quoted and these from the Knight's Tale

Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes; seem to indicate that Chaucer was familiar with the martial music of his time.

Furthermore, his clear-cut observations of the amateur musicians of his day often clear up troublesome questions about fourteenth-century music that musicologists have had difficulty in answering. To the question whether instrumentalists

\[\text{11. 1201-1209, 1214-1225, 1233-1242. For a list of instruments used by Chaucer in the Canterbury tales v. Olson, op. cit., p. 73.} \]

\[\text{25 I (A) 2511-2512.} \]
ever performed as soloists Absolon gives at least one answer.

In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Oxenford tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro,
And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
Therto he song som tyme a loud quynyle;
And as wel koude he pleye on a giterne.26

Apparently Absolon usually played his songs on the "giterne" but sometimes added descant as an extra flourish. The question of whether music was taught in the schools, is also answered by Chaucer for, in the Prioress tale, the "litel clergion" heard the music of the church service being taught as he attended school27.

A little scole of cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the fether ende, in which ther were
Children an heep, ycomen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer
Swich manere doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to syngen and to rede,

As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
He Alma redemptoris herde synge,
As children lerned hire antiphoner.28;

Of course this variety of musical knowledge might only indicate a superficial interest in a few well-known facts, instead of a careful training, but I doubt it, and for the following reasons.


27 In his explanatory notes F. N. Robinson points out that the "litel scole" was probably a "regular village school" rather than a "school of choir boys," p. 840.

If we examine his lyric poetry we find that he often used forms that had derived their structure from musical techniques, such as the ballade and rondeau. Originally the words and music of these genres were a single entity as in the old French ballade, Douce dame. If the musical form (ab ab cd E) of this example is compared with the poetic form used by Chaucer in this ballade from the Legend of Good Women

(1) Rhyme Musical Form

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere; a a
Ester, ley thow thy meknesse al adoun; b b
Hyd, Jonathas, al thyn frendly manere; a a
Penolope and Marcia Catoun, b b
Mak of youre wyfhod no comparisoun; b c
Hyde ye youre beautes, Ysoude and Eleyne: c d
Alceste is here, that all that may desteyne. C E

(2)

Thy fayre body, lat it nat apeere,
Laveyne; and thow, Lucrese of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boughte love so dere,
Ek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hide ye youre trought in love and youre renoun;
And thow, Tysbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that all that may desteyne.

(3)

Herro, Dido, Laodomya, alle in-fere,
Ek Phillis, hangynge for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Mak of youre trouthe in love no bost ne soun;
Nor Ypermystre or Adriane, ne pleyne:
Alceste is here, that all that may desteyne.

it will be found that the structure of the two works

29 Quoted on page 40 of this thesis.

30 "G" text, ll. 203-209.
is identical, for each have a repeated couplet and each have a repeated last line that serves as a refrain. In Chaucer's poem, however, the repetition of the last line for all verses serves no literary purpose but is a relic of the original musical form of the ballade. Moreover, Chaucer may have had a definite tune in mind when he wrote some of his poems, for, of the lovely Valentine rondel in the Parliament of fowls, he tells us that "The note, I trowe, imaked was in Fraunce."

The most important indication of Chaucer's musical ability was not these external references to music (important though they may be) but the way in which he resolved the English speech into a lilting music of his own. As long as he wrote pieces like the charming Valentine rondel or the superb lament of Troilus he did not need music to accompany his verses, they were sheer music in themselves.

Although it is not known who the Pearl poet was his poems seem to indicate that he had a background similar to that of Chaucer. Whereas there can be no positive proof, his evident knowledge of the gentleman's pastimes of war, hunting, singing, and dancing lends credibility to this suggestion.

That he had at least some familiarity with martial

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31 l. 677. The artificiality of form that was observable in the ballade was also present in the ronde.  
32 Bk. III, ll. 1450-1463.
music is evident in the shrill sound of his clarion "call to arms" in Nebuchadnezzar's camp before Jerusalem, "Cler claryoun crak cryed onlofte\(^{33}\); or in the noisy and frightening blare of trumpets in "Blastes out of bry\(\)t brasse brestes so hy\(\)se\(^{34}\). One can almost hear the roll of the military kettle drums in this line from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, "Nwe nakryn noyse with pe noble pipes\(^{35}\)."

Judged by his precise knowledge of Venery he was a man who had often raced after the game with horsemen and hounds and had heard the clear notes of the bugle through the forest air:

\[\text{Huntere}3 \text{ wyth hy}3\text{e horne hasted hem after Wyth such a crakkande kry, as klyffes haden brusten}^{36}.\]

In the hunting scenes he introduced three important calls, the mote (three notes sounded at the unleashing of the hounds\(^{37}\)), the recheat (four syllable call sounded three times on the second day to urge on the hounds), and the prise (four notes

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\(^{34}\) Ibid., l. 1783.

\(^{35}\) Gawain and the green knight, ed.; R. Morris, London, Trübner and Co., E.E.T.S. (Original Series), 1864, No. 4, 1.118. I am assuming that the Pearl poet also wrote these other two poems.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 11. 1165-1166.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 1. 1141.
succeeded by another four, a little longer, when the deer is taken\(^{38}\).

The serious pursuits of war and hunting were laid aside in the evening and the ladies and gentlemen gathered in the great hall for an evening's dancing and singing. Like Chaucer, the *Pearl* poet was familiar with the amusements of the upper classes. In *Gawain* he showed them on one evening enjoying the songs of the minstrels\(^ {39}\) while on another, they spent the time in singing and dancing.

His knowledge of music does not remain in the realm of the interested amateur, however, for it embraces all forms of music, vocal and instrumental, secular and ecclesiastical. This quotation from *Gawain* certainly seems to suggest a knowledge of the technical names of some of the types of popular songs:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Much glam & gle glent vp per-inne} \\
\text{Aboute be fyre vpon flet, & on fele wyse} \\
\text{At be soper & after, mony apel songe} \text{;} \\
\text{As coundutes of kryst-masse & carole} \text{;} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The inclusion of carols in the merrymaking is not unusual as they were a popular type of song and would be known to most people of the fourteenth century. But, as the *conductus* was no longer in favour\(^ {41}\), it would suggest that the *Pearl*

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\(^{38}\) *Gawain and the Green Knight*, 11. 1362-1364.


poet had specialized training of some sort. Moreover, there are other references which show that he had more than a perfunctory knowledge of music, for example, this free adaptation of Revelation 14, 2-3:

As harpore harpen in her harpe, 
bat nwe songe pay songen ful cler. 
In sounande note3 a gentyl carpe, 
Ful fayre be mode3 pay fonge in fere 42.

The "mode3" have reference to the eight ecclesiastical modes of plainsong which suggests that he may at one time have been under church musical discipline, possibly at one of the choir schools. One of their texts, The tonal, might have been the source of his knowledge 43.

Finally, like Chaucer he seems to have extended information about the instruments in use:

& per wat3 solace & songe wher sor3 hat3 ay cryed; 
For aungelkes with instrumentes of organes & pypes, 
& rial ryngande rotes, & be reken fypel. 
& alle hende bat honestly most an hert glade, 
Aboutte my lady wat3 lent 44.

It is in his manipulation of words to simulate different sounds, that he shows the closest association of words and music. In his remarkable use of onomatopoeia to

42 "Pearl", Early alliterative poems in the W. Midland dialect, 11. 881-884.


44 "Cleanness", Early alliterative poems in the W. Midland dialect, 11. 1080-84.
imitate the rhythm and sound of voice and instrument he surpasses all other poets of the time. This skill is not accidental; it suggests that he must have had a cultured ear and an understanding of the techniques of music to be so exact in the reproduction of their sound.

Different from men of the world like Chaucer and the Pearl poet was the author of Piers Plowman. Although the identity of the author is open to question he is generally conceded to be William Langland, "a clerical vagabond who earned his bread... by singing the Paternoster, Dirige, Placebo, Psalter, and Seven Penitential Psalms... for those who contributed to his support."  

Evidently Langland's training had made him hostile to the art of the minstrel for he never lost an opportunity of disparaging the profession, classing musicians with knaves and rascals. On one occasion, for example, he had "A rybibour and a ratoner a rakere and hus knave" welcome Glutton, while on another he said that Mede was

As comuyn as be Cart-wei- to knaues and to alle;  
To Preostes, to Minstrals to Mesels in hegges,

Moreover, when he mentioned a musician in a figure of speech

46 Piers Plowman, C text, Passus 7, 1.371. 
he was usually not very flattering to the musician. One time, for instance, he called lunatics"...murye-mouthede men mynstrales of heuene"," and at another he said

... to spille speche pat spyre is of grace,  
And goddes gleman and a game of heuene;  
Wolde neuere pe faithful fader his fithel were vntempred,  
We his gleman a gedelynge a goer to tauernes!48

Finally, he seemed to regard minstrelsy as a sin telling men that they should "Noujt to fare as a fitheler or a frere for to seek festes" nor "... to solace soure soules suche ministrales to haue".49

That Langland did not have the worldly musical background of Chaucer and the Pearl poet is borne out by his own words:

Ich can nat tabre ne trompe ne telle faire gestes,  
Farten, ne fipelen, at festes, ne harpen;  
Iapen ne Iogelen, ne gentelliche pipe;  
Noper sailen, ne sautrien, ne singe with be giterne.51

Moreover, instead of singing "compleyntes" to his lady as a court poet would have done, Langland pictured the common folk at work and play,

And panne seten somme and songen atte nale,  
And hulpen erie his half acre with "how! trolli-lolli"52!

48 Piers Plowman, C text, Passus 10, l. 126.  
49 Ibid., B text, Passus 10, l. 92.  
50 Ibid., B text, Passus 13, l. 443.  
51 Ibid., C text, Passus 16, ll. 205-208.  
52 Ibid., B text, Passus 6, ll. 117-118.
or described many hundreds of angels that

...harpeden & songen,
Cuplat caro, purgat caro; regnat deus dei caro\(^53\).

Finally, it was not the clarion's call to arms that interested Langland, for, with him, it was "Treuth \[^{\text{that}}\] tromped"\(^54\) and "pees" that "...piped... of poysye a note\(^55\)."

Although his temperament was alien to the jingles of the court poets even he had his moments when he felt that it was a reproach not knowing the music of the world:

bei conne namore mynstralcye ne muske, men to glade,
Than Munde pe mylnere, of multa fecit deus\(^56\).

To a professional singer of masses, as Langland was believed to be, moreover, the Latin lines so liberally sprinkled throughout his work would be familiar to him as something chanted rather than read. Since he slipped naturally from Anglo-Saxon to Latin to Anglo-Saxon again in his work it is not surprising to find that the Anglo-Saxon lines can also be chanted. Indeed, these lines slide so easily into any of the "eight tones" specified for the psalter that there is at least a possibility that Langland had these tunes in mind when he composed his work. Now this statement does not mean that the poem was chanted instead of read, (though it could

\(^{53}\) Piers Plowman, B text, Passus 18, l. 405-406.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., B text, Passus 13, l. 230.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., B text, Passus 13, l. 407.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., B text, Passus 10, ll. 43-44.
have been and may have been by the poet himself), nor does it imply that alliterative poetry was connected with the music of the church; it merely suggests that Langland was so steeped in ecclesiastical music that he could effortlessly reproduce the familiar rhythms of the church without altering the structure of his poem.

In this century, then, when poetry was no longer written primarily to be sung or intoned it is interesting to note that the three most important writers of England still made use of music, in one way or another, in their poetry.
Chapter VI

In the fifteenth century, though much that was medieval still survived, the continental poets and musicians of the new era were looking forward, experimenting with, and developing the new forms that were to make the Renaissance so memorable.

In the field of drama there was one development that is worthy of notice, namely, the creation of the spectacular court pageants. Oddly enough the chief factor in their development was the ancient foundation of the Chapel Royal, which supplied the religious exercises of the court. Since the directors of the Chapel Royal were not just music directors but had at their disposal actors, producers, and writers, it is easy to understand how an establishment of this nature became connected with the worldly plays of the court. Some idea of the importance attached to this school is conveyed by the following extract from the Harleian manuscript 433, where Richard III empowered John Melynek, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal

... to take and seize for the king all such singing men and children expert in the science of music, within all places of the realm, as well in cathedral, churches, colleges, chapels,...exempt places or elsewhere1.

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At first, the men and boys were probably drawn into the dramatists' entertainment merely to add incidental music, but by the end of the century they had begun to act.

In the music of the fifteenth century the desire to bring some order into chord progressions and to relate them to one another becomes evident. This composition by Lionel Power gives some indication of the attempts that were made at functional harmony.

In vocal music attention was largely concentrated on the sensuous effect of combining the different voices rather than on the sentiments of the text. In fact, musicians of the fifteenth century paid little or no attention to the text they were setting; the medieval balance of word and music was gone. Even Dunstable was guilty in this respect, for in one bar of the following extract he twice places a rest in the middle of a word.

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2 Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 63.
For the rest, the old forms of secular music and poetry had not changed; the ballade, chanson, rondel, and virelai were what they had been in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the rondel, for example being used in Dunstable's settings of O rosa bella and Puisque m'amour. Moreover, the traditions of the church were carried on in Damett's setting of the hymn Beata Dei genitrix and Dunstable's Sancta Maria.

With the coming of polyphony, then, the poets' and musicians' conception of the inter-relationship of music and poetry was completely changed. Writer and musician, for example, were no longer a single person but were two artists trained to exploit their individual arts. Although poets still knew a great deal about music (employing figures...
of speech borrowed from the language of music, using its rhythms for their lines, and simulating various musical sounds in their words), and musicians still employed texts for their songs, they no longer expected the two arts to be a single entity. Evidence of this changed outlook and practice may be found in the appearance of purely instrumental music (as in the Estampies Lamento di Tristan and Saltarello or the Organ Estampie⁶) and in the development of poetry that was written according to its own metrical rules⁷.

The arts had finally separated.

---

⁶ Apel and Davison, op. cit., No. 59a, 59b, and 58.

⁷ Note, for example, how Chaucer is thinking particularly of the metre in this passage from Troilus and Criseyde when he suggests that his work might be either read or sung.

Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye,

........................

And for ther is so gret diversite
In Englissh and in writyng of oure tonge,
So prey I God that non myswrite the,
Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge.
And red wherso thou be, or elles songe.

Bk. 5, 11. 1786-1797.
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